The Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union as a hermeneutical community: examining the identity of the All-Union Council of the ECB (AUCECB) through the way the Bible was used in its publications

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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I hereby give consent for my thesis if accepted to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Abstract

The Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB) in the Soviet Union are the focus of this investigation. Quite often this religious group was viewed through the prism of the persecution of Christian believers in the Communist state. The present research proposes a new perspective. It focuses on the inner world of the ECB and tries to demonstrate their worldviews, ideals and aspirations. The method chosen for this task consists in analysing the approach to biblical interpretation as observed in publications of the All-Union Council of ECB, which operated during the post-World War II period. An analysis of ways how the Bible was used in published materials produced during the Communist period - in *Bratsky Vestnik*, the official periodical of the Union of ECB, in handbooks of Bible Correspondence Courses of the ECB, and in other educational and devotional books and articles - helps to reconstruct the identity of Soviet evangelicals.

The dissertation consists of three parts (three chapters each). The first part introduces the history of the use of the Bible in publications of the ECB. The roots of the denomination in earlier Russian Baptist and Evangelical Christian life, and the traditions of publishing, constitute the content of chapter 2. The next chapter presents the history of publishing by the All-Union Council from its foundation in 1944 to its end in 1993. In chapter 4 there is an analysis of general principles of biblical hermeneutics evident in the ECB. The conclusions arising from Part I lead on to an exploration of different dimensions of biblical interpretation in AUCECB writings.

Part II, entitled “Biblical hermeneutics and aims in ECB publications”, considers several spheres where interpretation of the Bible by ECB authors suggest that definite aims were being pursued. These aims were doctrinal (chapter 5), educational (chapter 6) and ideological (chapter 7). An analysis of those spheres demonstrates that all of them had significance but that none of them formed the centre of ECB’s hermeneutical consciousness.

Part III, “The spirituality of the ECB expressed in publications”, investigates spiritual formation as to the source for and the goal of the interpretative activity of the AUCECB. It is argued in chapters 8 and 9 that a focus on conversion and especially on the holy life of the converted person was crucial to the way the Bible was used by the ECB. The final chapter seeks to demonstrate that hermeneutical activity by the ECB can be seen as a compilation of Biblical narratives and the building of a Sacred Grand Narrative, which helped to model the image of ideal saints in order to nurture the believers. This investigation suggests that the idea of holiness, deduced from a particular interpretation of the Bible, was the coherent core of AUCECB identity.

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I am immensely grateful to many people to whom I became indebted while writing my thesis. First, I need to express my gratitude to the IBTS academic community which guided me through the maze of research. Every seminar, every contact with this community opened up a world of new insights, ideas and revelations. Here I need to point out three particular persons who invested much in my studies. Dr. Ian Randall supervised my work and offered innumerable priceless impulses and directions. I found him to be the best supervisor I have ever met in my life. Secondly, I appreciate the great investment of Dr. Parush Parushev who organized colloquia meetings to be maximally helpful and voiced a number of valuable comments concerning my work. Thirdly, Dr. Toivo Pilli, my second supervisor, read the dissertation and proposed important pieces of advice. I cannot list all other people at IBTS, including students and librarians, who contributed to my writing in different ways.

My research was done in Russia and is about Russians. So I cannot omit mention of several persons in the Russian Union of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists and in the Moscow Theological Seminary of the ECB who accompanied me throughout all years of my work on the thesis. These people inspired me in my research and stimulated it. There are some special persons whose help I cannot leave unnamed. I am thankful to Alexei Sinichkin, the archivist of the RUECB, who provided me with all the needed documents and information. My deep appreciation goes to Dr. Sergey Sannikov, the chair of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association, for his guidance on the early history of the ECB and to Dr. Gennadi Savin from the People's Friendship University of Russia for his help in the area of Russian philology and Orthodox history. There are also particular persons who started to prepare me for writing this dissertation long before I ever envisioned starting this research. These were my teachers from the Bible Correspondence Courses: Alexander Savchenko(†), Walter Mitskevich, Vitaly Kulikov (†), Alexei Bichkov, Vladimir Popov, Marina Karetnikova and many others. While writing my dissertation I hoped they would be proud of me.

Also I want to thank Katharina Penner and Nancy Lively, both of whom read my work attentively and made many critical and constructive comments, helping me to improve the language and clarity of the text. My special thanks also to Professor John Briggs for his critical comments, which were of great benefit to me.

Finally, I thank my wife Elena Popova, the librarian of Moscow Theological Seminary, for her daily support and patience.

Abbreviations

AUCECB – the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians – Baptists

BCC – Bible Correspondence Courses

BV – *Bratskii Vestnik* ("Fraternal messenger" – the periodical of the AUCECB)

BWA – the Baptist World Alliance

CARC - the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults

CCECB – the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians – Baptists

CPSU – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

EBF – European Baptist Federation

ECB – Evangelical Christians-Baptists

EKhB - *Evangel'skie Khristiane-Baptisty (sokhranivshie vernost' Evangeliju)* [Evangelical Christian-Baptists (those who preserved faithfulness to the Gospel)], (Moscow: Protestant, 1992)

HECB – *Istoriia Ievangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR], (Moscow: Izdaniie Vsesoiuznogo Soveta Evangel'skikh Khristian Baptistov, 1989)

Mitskevich - A.I. Mitskevich, *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov*[History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], (Moscow: 2007)

RCL - *Religion in Communist Lands*

ROC – the Russian Orthodox Church

RUECB – the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

Savinsky, Part I – S.N. Savinskii, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii. Ch. I: (1867-1917)* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine, Russia and Belorussia, part I: (1867-1917)], (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 2001)

Savinsky, part II - Savinskii, S.N., *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii. Ch. II: (1917-1967)* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine, Russia and Belorussia, part II: (1917-1967)] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 2001)

Sawatsky - Sawatsky, W., *Soviet evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1981)

USSR – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

YCL – Young Communist League (*Komsomol*)

Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis is a study of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB), which was formed in 1944. More specifically, it looks at the way in which this Union's identity was expressed by an examination of the use of the Bible in its publications. Until recent years, little scholarly work was done on the AUCECB. Earlier movements of Evangelical Christians and Baptists – in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century - received scholarly attention in the 1970s,[1] and in 2005 Heather Coleman published her book on Russian Baptists in the period 1905-1929,[2] but the history and identity of the AUCECB needs fuller critical investigation. [3] It is difficult to overestimate the impact of this movement on virtually all Protestant churches within the territory of the former USSR.[4] Even completely new congregations that have emerged since the fall of the Soviet Union are marked by the influence of the traditions, insights, and preferences that were formed within this stream of spirituality, which drew into itself the experiences of two Unions – the Evangelical Christians and the Baptists - within the Russian Empire and then later in the Soviet Union.[5] For a number of different groups in Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere in the

[1] Two important studies undertaken in the 1970s are: Samuel John Nesdoly, 'Evangelical Sectarianism in Russia: A Study of the Stundists, Baptists, Pashkovites, and Evangelical Christians 1855-1917' (Ph.D. thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1971); and Paul Steeves, 'The Russian Baptist Union, 1917-1935: Evangelical Awakening in Russia' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Kansas, 1976). These works did not deal with the AUCECB.

[2] Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[3] Probably the most significant introduction is Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1981). (Hereafter, Sawatsky). I will discuss the understanding of identity towards the end of this chapter.

[4] According to W. Sawatsky, 'Visions in Conflict: Starting anew through the prism of leadership training', in N.C. Nielsen, ed., *Christianity after Communism* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1994) (pp.113-136), p. 125, up to six million people could have been affected by the ECB movement by the end of *Perestroika.*

[5] The histories of these two Unions will be considered in chapter 2.

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), most evidently Baptists, Mennonites, and Pentecostals, the history of the AUCECB constitutes an essential part of their identity.[6]

a. Foreword

First of all, for the purpose of this thesis, it is necessary to provide a picture of the place of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists within Russian religious history. The AUCECB, with its headquarters in Moscow, was formed in 1944 under the direction of the Communist regime. It brought together primarily Evangelical Christian and Baptist communities that had taken shape in the nineteenth and early twentieth century period within the Russian Empire, and also incorporated Pentecostals (1945) and Mennonites (1966). The merger was the product of the religious policy of Stalin, who wanted to have control over evangelical congregations. Was the AUCECB, therefore, anything more than a construct which believers with somewhat different historic origins and identities had to use to gain legal status in an atheistic state?[7] Or did it embody something that was authentic to the shared identity of many thousands (indeed hundreds of thousands) of believers in Eurasia?

The answers are not straightforward. The diversity of religious opinions within the AUCECB was certainly noticeable. The All-Union Council brought together existing denominational entities in Russia with different doctrinal, liturgical, and ethical approaches. Moreover, the AUCECB included a considerable number of national groups who naturally held to their own particular evangelical traditions.[8] Nevertheless, all these diverse Christians had some things in common. They shared the fate of not being welcome and often being actively persecuted in the hostile environment of the post-war Soviet Union. They also held in common their evangelical Christian ideals and a great desire to survive and to preserve their convictions in spite of all the pressure from mainstream society. So the unity which was offered by the All-Union Council of the ECB was what they needed in those circumstances. The forces that pushed them to unity were seen as stronger than their differences. This denomination, created by Stalin's government, proved its durability through surviving the various crises during Soviet times, the upheavals of Perestroika, and even the deconstruction

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[6] See A. Negrov, T. Nikol'skaia, 'Baptists as a Symbol of Sectarianism in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia', in Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: New Perspectives* (Prague: IBTS, 2007), pp. 133-142.

[7] For a recent extended study of the views of the origins of the evangelical movements in Russia, see A. Puzynin, 'The Tradition of the Gospel Christians: A Study of their Identity and Theology during the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Periods' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 2008). I will return to this thesis.

[8] Toivo Pilli has examined the Estonian experience in *Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008).

of the AUCECB with the ending of the USSR. The legacy remains: today's Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine and Russia are among the largest national Baptist Unions in the European Baptist Federation (EBF).[9] National or immigrant unions deriving from the ECB also exist in parts of the world to which members of this union have emigrated.[10]

Despite the AUCECB's highly significant role in the religious life in Eurasia, this denomination has been insufficiently studied. In addition, the accounts of the history that exist vary greatly in quality. I will look at some in more detail in the next section. Some have praised the extraordinary spiritual strength of ECB members who succeeded in preserving their faith in the oppressive atmosphere of state atheism,[11] while others have accused the leaders of collaborating with the Communist regime and of betraying evangelical principles.[12] In the Soviet period information concerning the ECB and especially its leadership was protected and not available to ordinary people. Thus writing on this topic was quite often the privilege of only those persons who were directly involved. Even today, two decades after the end of the AUCECB, there is a certain reluctance to write about the recent history of Soviet evangelicals. Thus up to 70-80% of all publications about Evangelical Christians and Baptists written in the Russian language (which constitute, no doubt, the majority of all such publications) are devoted to the pre-AUCECB period. This is in part because recent history still provokes controversy, and those within today's Baptist Unions have been reluctant to engage with some of the controversial issues.[13] In the four-volume *Almanac* on the history of

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[9] The EBF and its identity is the subject of a study by Keith G. Jones, *The European Baptist Federation: A Case Study in European Baptist Interdependency, 1950-2000* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009).

[10] I am not familiar with any serious research on Russian-speaking unions of ECB origin in the world in general. The doctoral dissertation by Viktor Zander, 'Identity and marginality among Slavic Baptists in Victoria' (Ph.D. thesis, Deakin University, 1999) is an example of particular studies of local situations. Possibly research could start with studies of Euro-Asian Federation of the Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (website www.e-af.org). A thorough investigation of ECB believers in different countries would be a major project.

[11] E.g. D.E. Kucharsky, 'Moscow Report: Against such, no law', in *Christianity Today*, June 23, 1972, pp. 45-50.

[12] Different perspectives were present from the AUCECB's beginnings, as Irina Bondareva-Zuechlike has shown was the case in Moldova: 'Separation or Co-operation? Moldavian Baptists (1940-1965)', in K.G. Jones and I.M. Randall, eds., *Counter-Cultural Communities: Baptistic Life in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 63-113.

[13] General problems of historiography of the Soviet Union and Russia after WWII are examined in the work by A.K. Sokolov, 'Sotsial'naia istoriia Rossii noveishego vremeni: problemy metodologii i istochnikovedeniia' [Social history of Russia of the most recent time: problems of methodology and source studies], in *Sotsial'naia istoriia*, [Social History], 1998/99, pp. 39-76.

the ECB only a few articles in Volume 2 (produced in 2001) are devoted to the post-WWII period, but all the other material is focused on earlier periods.[14] Yet a proper examination of the life of evangelical believers in the Soviet period is crucial for an understanding of wider dissent in Soviet experience.[15] This study seeks to contribute to scholarly investigation by concentrating on the mentality or, more specifically, the spiritual identity of the AUCECB, and in particular on the way the interpretation of the Bible expressed the identity of the community.[16] In their engagement with the Bible in their writings, the Soviet Evangelical Christians-Baptists, I will argue, were a distinctive hermeneutical community.

b. Published perspectives on the ECB

In order to become acquainted with the AUCECB it is helpful to start with a survey of sources relating to its history. However, this section is more than a literary survey: my purpose here is to show the way in which the Evangelical Christians and Baptists have been portrayed by those operating from differing perspectives. It is against this background that I wish to present my own proposal for an understanding of the AUCECB. First of all, it is important to stress the exceptional role of the official journal of the AUCECB, *Bratsky Vestnik* (lit. "Fraternal Messenger", hereafter abbreviated as *BV*). From 1944 this was the main publication of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Often other publications of the AUCECB were replicas of articles the Council had previously published in its journal.[17] Because of this phenomenon, the history of the AUCECB's publishing activities, and thus of the All-Union Council's stance on all major issues and its essential mentality, cannot be separated from the history of *BV*.

BV was a child and (to change the metaphor) a satellite of the All-Union Council. It began at the same time as the Council itself and played a very important (if not central) role in the AUCECB's functioning. All the official history of the Union of Evangelical Christians-

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[14] *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* [Almanac on the History of the Russian Baptists] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, v. 1, 1997, v. 2, 2001, v. 3, 2004, v. 4, 2009).

[15] Philip Boobbyer offers a wider study of dissent in *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia*, BASEES/Routledge series on Russian and East European Studies 21 (London New York: Routledge, 2005).

[16] Studies of evangelicals in recent years have generally followed the argument put forward by David Bebbington that evangelicalism is a movement comprising all those who stress conversion, the cross, the Bible and activism. D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 2-17. I am looking especially at one aspect: the Bible. Conversion, however, is also a crucial and related issue which I will address.

[17] Here I do not include underground publications of the *Initsiativniki* or Reform Baptists, later the Council of Churches of the ECB, who broke away from the AUCECB in the 1960s. See footnote 19.

Baptists as that history unfolded is assembled on the pages of the journal in records of meetings, conferences, and forums, reports of important events, and local informational notes. The journal was used to inform Soviet evangelicals about what was happening in the AUCECB, to announce the official version/interpretation of events, and to spread the instructions and decisions of the leading body, the Council. Thus, *BV* preserved the history of the ECB and, to some extent, created it. But *BV* fulfilled another function, one which has not often been recognized, as a spiritual leader and a nurturer of believers, containing many devotional reflections, sermons and theological articles. This aspect of the periodical is exceptionally significant for contemporary studies because it demonstrates the inner world and spirituality of the ECB.

The general tendency in work on the Evangelical Christians and Baptists to focus on early developments is understandable in terms of the desire to convey a picture of the Tsarist period and the early Soviet period, when there was astonishing evangelical success, and to avoid controversial issues such as the very painful schism among Soviet evangelicals in the 1960s.[18] There is, therefore, a pressing need to look properly at the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the post-WWII period. In examining this period, it should be noted that it is only from 1944 that it is correct to apply the name Evangelical Christians-Baptists to evangelical Christians in Russia. Consequently, this review of written perspectives on the ECB will concentrate largely on studies that cover the period from 1944 to 1993, which is the period of the AUCECB.

For the reasons mentioned above, the *BV,* along with publications and archives associated with it, will be the main source for the analysis in the present thesis of the ECB as a hermeneutical community, a community which read the Bible and in its use of the Bible expressed its identity in a certain way. All other papers and books related to the ECB can reasonably be divided into the following categories: 1. Works by authors associated with the ECB; 2. Works by Communist authors who were involved in the ideological struggle against religion in the USSR; 3. Works by foreign authors in North America and Western Europe which usually maintained a critical attitude towards Communism.[19] Each of these categories will now be considered in more detail.

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[18] For a recent scholarly examination see Constantine Prokhorov, 'The State and the Baptist Churches in the USSR (1960-1980)', in Jones and Randall, eds., *Counter-Cultural Communities* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 1-61.

[19] I do not consider here the publications of the Reform Baptists for two reasons: 1. The Reform Baptists did not have much information about the AUCECB especially after the 1970s when they broke off all

1. Works by authors associated with the ECB

Historical works by those who were actors on the stage of AUCECB history have special significance because they comprise the main primary sources of information about the ECB as a hermeneutical community. At the same time, when dealing with such texts the reader has to take into account certain issues concerning their interpretation. First of all, ECB authors always had personal interests in writing their works. This is true for apologists of the AUCECB, not only for its critics. Also, they always wrote having in mind a certain kind of censorship. There was, of course, state censorship, but there was also something more than, and different from, the controlling power of the state. Writers were influenced by a strong desire not to say anything that might provoke trouble of any sort. They were also concerned about whether what they wrote would be considered sufficiently pious. Finally, it must be recognised that there were no professional historians among these authors. Most of them did not have any education beyond basic schooling. For believers to go to university in the Communist period was virtually impossible. It is not surprising that the perceptions offered in the works of these authors contained little historical sophistication.

The book by Arthur Mitskevich, a "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists",[20] (English translations of Russian titles are generally used in the text) is the most important work on the history of the ECB in the Soviet period. This book was written as a manual for the AUCECB's Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC), which began in 1968.[21] Mitskevich was the first president of the Union's correspondence department. His work on the history of the ECB was banned at the time,[22] and was published only in 2007 by the Department of Theology and Catechism of the Russian Baptist Union.[23] Mitskevich was considered within

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relations with the official Union. Their sources can be used mainly for description of relations between the two Unions but not for a general history of the ECB; 2. The Reform Baptists have never had any historical projects.

[20] A.I. Mitskevich, *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists] (Moscow: RSEKhB, 2007).

[21] The Bible Correspondence Courses were started in 1968 as the single training centre for leaders of the AUCECB. Handbooks prepared for the BCC had a great importance for the formation of ECB theology.

[22] At that time any full account of the history of the ECB would have been considered anti-Soviet because it could not avoid the fact of the mass persecution of believers in the 1930s. The history written by Mitskevich, however, does contain such information (pp. 276-295). Indeed the author claims openly that those persecutions were unfair and that the great majority of the arrested believers were innocent.

[23] The Department of Theology and Catechism of the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (RUECB), headed by Mikhail Ivanov, was established in 2006. Its purpose is the publication of popular

the AUCECB to be one of the most competent among all the All-Union's authors. He was someone with a great deal of inside knowledge, having been one of the AUCECB's key leaders from the beginning in 1944. Even before that, he had played an important role in the Union of Evangelical Christians. He was appointed as superintendent (senior presbyter) of the ECB in Kiev in 1946, but soon moved to Moscow to become a member of the Presidium of the AUCECB. When Mitskevich wrote about the Soviet period he knew from experience what he was writing about.[24]

Mitskevich's book is a compilation of a large number of documents and testimonies about the origins of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist groups in the Russian Empire and then in the USSR up to 1983. Approximately half of the book is devoted to the history of the AUCECB, which is impressive given the tendency by All-Union participants to avoid writing about this period. Compared to other similar texts, Mitskevich's work is the most detailed and covers the longest time span. It is, therefore, of great value as a primary source since it contains so much documentation, and since its writing was a key event in the Union's history. At the same time, the work, strictly speaking, cannot be called historical research. It lacks any analysis of the materials being utilized. Nor is there a consistent or coherent structure; indeed the book reads like a first draft, which it actually was, since Mitskevich stopped serious work on it after he realized that it could not be published during his lifetime.

There are two other fully-fledged volumes written by representatives of the AUCECB. These books are the two-volume "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Ukraine, Russia, and Byelorussia, 1917-1967", by Sergey Savinsky,[25] and the "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR" (hereafter *HECB*) written by several authors, including Sergei Savinsky, Ivan (Johannes) Dyck and Pavel Savchenko.[26] Both books

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theological literature and the organization of training seminars. The publication of the book by A. Mitskevich was initiated by Alexei Sinichkin, the archivist of the Union, who belongs to that Department.

[24] The autobiography of A. Mitskevich, written in 1983 (when he was 81 years old), can be found at the end of his book (pp. 506-531).

[25] S. Savinsky, *Istoriya evangelskikh khristian-baptistov Ukraini, Rossii, Belorussii* (St. Petersburg: Biblia dlia vsekh, 2001). A digest of this book was published earlier by Odessa Theological Seminary under the title 'History of Russian-Ukrainian Baptists: Manual' (S. Savinsky, *Istoriia russko-ukrainskogo baptizma: uchbenoie posobiie* (Odessa: Bogomysliie, 1995). I will not consider this manual separately since it contains nothing new compared to the full version of Savinsky's work.

[26] *Istoriia Ievangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: Izdaniie Vsesoiuznogo Soveta Evangel'skikh Khristian Baptistov, 1989). Details of this work can be found in an interview with Savinsky by Konstantine Prokhorov: K. Prokhorov, *Podvig very* [The feat of faith] (Omsk: Nauka, 2010), pp. 78-82.

originated from the office of the All-Union Council and have much in common. Sometimes the texts of both editions show verbal overlap. Also, both display a tendency to present the Russian evangelical movement's identity in a particular way: to see the movement as a genuine fruit of unique Russian spirituality and as one in which foreign influence was minimal. The goal of these books is clearly apologetic. Their aim is to respond to traditional accusations that Russian Baptists were not indigenous, were not patriotic and could rightly be accused of "cosmopolitanism".[27]

The actual writing of these volumes was preceded by long preparatory work. Although *HECB* mentions the existence of an historical committee within the AUCECB in 1965, it is impossible to trace any systematic activity taking place on a compilation of the ECB history until 1967-1970, when the creation of such a committee was tied to the centenary celebrations of Baptist life in Russia. The results of investigations by this committee formed the core of future historical works, even though Union leaders failed to obtain government permission to publish them at the time. Instead, the General Secretary of the AUCECB, Alexander Karev, published a series of historical articles in *BV*. Also, one of the teachers involved in the Bible Correspondence Courses, Yuri Grachov, prepared twelve lessons on the subject of ECB history.[28] However, these lessons were not accepted by the Board of Trustees because of their dissident spirit.[29] The historical committee, led by Savinsky,[30] resumed its work in 1979 in order to prepare a thoroughly researched volume on the history of the ECB that would include all aspects of its activities. Representatives of all national and denominational groups and traditions within the AUCECB were invited to participate in the project. In 1983 the Committee proposed a draft of the book, and this was revised several times. However, government officials did not give permission for its

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[27] For a recent contribution to this issue see Albert Wardin, 'How Indigenous was the Baptist Movement in the Russian Empire?', *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (January 2009), pp. 29-38.

[28] Y.S. Grachov, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists] (handwritten, in the Archive of the Russian Union of ECB). Some of the material from these lectures can be found in Yuri Grachev's published book, *Studencheskie gody: Povest' o studencheskom khristianskom dvizhenii v Rossii* [Student Years: The story of the Student Christian Movement in Russia] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 1997).

[29] These lessons have still not been published. They indicate that considerable work was done, but they contain almost no information on the post-war, AUCECB history.

[30] Officially, one of the members of the Executive Committee of the AUCECB, Jacob Dukhonchenko, presided over the historical committee. But, in fact, its driving force and coordinator was Savinsky, who was in close contact with P. Savchenko and I. Dyck.

publication until the very end of enforced atheism in the USSR. As result, the book, "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists",[31] was issued only in 1989, toward the end of Perestroika and on the crest of the wave of religious affirmation that marked the millennial celebration of Christianity in Russia. This book presented a general scheme of the origins of evangelicals in the Russian empire and a series of historical sketches about evangelicalism in every geographical part of the Soviet Union. Also, it contained separate chapters on the history of Pentecostals and Mennonites, who officially belonged to the ECB. Special attention was given to specific aspects of the life and identity of the ECB: to its music and poetry, to peace-making and to theological achievements.

Although the work included an abundance of materials about a large number of churches and church leaders, it was silent or sketchy on some important issues. For example, the book devotes only eleven pages to the persecution of believers during Stalin's Great Purge.[32] The life of believers after World War II is described only schematically. In general, this part of the book simply reproduces reports from *Bratsky Vestnik*. This fact might be explained by state censorship, which remained an important factor even during Perestroika. Nevertheless, Savinsky's enlarged two-volume work, covering 1867 to 1967 (issued in 2001),[33] demonstrates the same lack of interest in the AUCECB period. Only materials concerning the persecution of the churches and the serious split in the AUCECB which took place in 1960 (which produced a breakaway group, the *Initsiativniki* or Reform Baptists, later the Council of Churches of the ECB), were added to the fuller version of Savinsky's history. This has to be understood in the light of the sustained apologetic character of Savinsky's research. His goal, still, consisted in demonstrating the continuity of a Russian genuine spiritual tradition which, in his opinion, was embodied in the evangelical movement in the Russian empire. Savinsky does not note any originality in the developments that took place in the second part of the twentieth century. His agenda consists rather in returning to the ideals of the pre-Stalin period in the life of Russian Baptists.

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[31] *Istoriia Ievangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: Izdaniie Vsesoiuznogo Soveta Evangel'skikh Khristian Baptistov, 1989).

[32] This needs to be compared to the total size of the book - 622 pages.

[33] S. Savinskii, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii. Ch. I: (1867-1917), Ch. II: (1917-1967)* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine, Russia and Belorussia, Part I: (1867-1917), Part II: (1917-1967)] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh , 2001).

In recent years several works have appeared on the history of the ECB by authors from different Baptist Unions.[34] But they virtually never touch on issues of the post-war history of this movement. In my judgment the most valuable materials in this area are a series of articles by A. Sinichkin on the history of the schism in 1960,[35] and certain documents in the third volume of the "Almanac on the History of Russian Baptists" (2004). Among those can be found the memoirs of Sergei Fadiukhin, a member of the AUCECB, who offered a specifically Baptist rather than an Evangelical Christian perspective.[36] This work contains valuable information about the activities of the AUCECB. But in all these writings by those within the ECB movement there is a lack of any attempt to probe the inner dynamics of the AUCECB as a spiritual community.

2. Works by Communist authors

Another strand of studies related to Evangelical Christians and Baptists can be found in the anti-sectarian literature published in the USSR. Anti-Baptist literature predated the Communist period. Like other sectarian movements, Baptists in the Russian Empire were studied by Russian Orthodox "anti-sectarian missionaries" (*antirasskolnicheskiye missioneri*), as they were called. These missionaries even published a journal in the pre-1917 period,[37] and regularly issued books on the dangers of sectarianism.[38] By contrast with this Orthodox

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[34] Evgenii Reshetnikov (*Obzor istorii evangel'sko-baptistskogo bratstva v Ukraine* [Survey of the history of the Evangelical Baptist brotherhood in Ukraine] (Odessa: "Bogomyslie", 2000); Vladimir Popov, *I.S. Prokhanov, stranitsi zhizni* [I.S.Prokhanov, Pages of life] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 1996); *Stopy blagovestnika: zhizn' i trudy V.G. Pavlova* [Footsteps of the evangelist: life and works of V.G. Pavlov]; (Moscow: Blagovestnik,1996), and work by Marina Karetnikova, e.g. 'I.V.Kargel' , in *Almanakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* [Almanac on the History of the Russian Baptists], v.4 (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2009). She also was the editor of the *Almanakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* [Almanac on the History of the Russian Baptists].

[35] A. Sinichkin, ''Dialog mezhdu STsEKhB i VSEKhB 1961-1972 gg.' [Dialogue between the AUCECB and the CCECB from 1961 to 1972], *Theognosis*, vol. 10, pp. 40-81; vol. 11, pp. 82-128; vol. 12, pp. 87-127.

[36] S.P. Fadiukhin, '*Vospominaniia o perezhitom*' [Remembering the past] (in *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* [Almanac on the History of Russian Baptists] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, vol. 3, 2004).

[37] *Missionerskoye obozreniye. Protivoseknanskiy Zhurnal* [Missionary Review: Anti-sectarian Magazine]. The periodical was published from 1896-1916, in Kiev.

[38] See A. Prugavin, *Raskol vverkhu* [Schism at the top] (St. Petersburg: "Obshchestvennaia pol'za", 1909), G. Terletskii, *Sekta Pashkovtsev* [The sect of Pashkovites] (St. Petersburg: Izdanie knigoprodavtsa I.L.Tuzova. Gostinyi dvor, 45, 1891), and T.Butkevich, *Obzor russkikh sekt i ikh tolkov: s izlozheniem ikh*

perspective, works written by Communist authors in the Tsarist period offered a reasonably positive evaluation of sectarian movements. For instance, in the famous novel by Sergei Stepnyak-Kravchinsky (1891), "The Stundist, Pavel Rudenko",[39] the author shows a degree of sympathy for evangelical believers (often called *Stundists*, deriving from the German word *Bibelstunde* 'Bible study class'; *Bibelstunde* was known to German Christians since the sixteenth-century Reformation[40]), whom he assesses as some form of revolutionaries.

Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, future prominent member of the Soviet government and the first director of the Museum of Atheism and Religion in Leningrad, was actively involved in the early twentieth century in gathering materials on Russian evangelicals. The main outcome of his investigation was the multi-volume publication of "Materials on the history and studies of Russian sectarianism and schism" (*Materialy v istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektanstva i raskola*) which contained sections devoted to early Russian Baptists,[41] and to Stundists.[42] After the victorious October Revolution, the new revolutionary regime, led by representatives of the radical wing of the Communist movement like Vladimir Lenin and Lev Trotsky, had little interest in studying domestic Baptists.[43] Although showing a certain tolerance for Baptists in the early 1920s, the Soviet government never considered evangelicals in any other context except that of the struggle against religion. In 1921, the

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proiskhozhdeniia, rasprostraneniia i verouchenia i s oproverzheniem poslednego [Survey of Russian sects with account of their origin, spread, doctrines, and refutation of those doctrines] (Petrograd, 1915).

[39] The novel was written in 1891 but it was not published that time. Its first legal publication was in 1907. The text is accessible in the Soviet edition of the novel: S. Stepniak-Kravchinskii *Sochineniia. T.2: Shtundist Pavel Rudenko* [Works, V. 2, Shtundist Pavel Rudenko] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1958).

[40] J. Zeiger 'Bibelstunde', in *Gemeindelexikon* (Wuppertal:Hrsg. Helmut Burkhardt, 1986), p. 79.

[41] E.g. V.G. Pavlov, *Vospominaniia ssyl'nogo baptista* [Memoirs of an exiled Baptist], in *Materialy v istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektanstva i raskola, Vyp.1: Baptisty; beguny; dukhobortsy; L.Tolstoi o skopchestve; pavlovtsy; pomortsy; staroobriadtsy; skoptsy; shtundisty* [Materials on the history and studies of Russian sectarianism and dissent, Part 1: Baptists, Beguns, Dukhobortsys, L. Tolstoy about Skoptsys, Pavlovtsys, Pomortsys, Old Believers, Skoptsys, Schtundists]. This volume was edited by V. Bonch-Bruevich (St. Petersburg: Prometei, 1908), pp. 1-31.

[42] T.A. Zaiats, *Rukopisi i pis'ma* [Manuscripts and letters], in *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola Vyp. 3: Shtundisty. - Postniki. Svobodnye khristiane. Dukhovnye skoptsy. Staroobriadtsy* [Materials on the history and studies of Russian sectarianism and dissent, Part 3: Stundists, Postnikys, Free Christians, Spiritual Skoptsys, Old Believers], ed., V. Bonch-Bruevich (St. Petersburg: Prometei, 1910), pp. 9-57.

[43] There were people who were ready to collaborate with sectarians, having in mind propagating Communist ideas in the sectarians groups. Lenin proposed distributing Communist publications among Baptists (I.A. Kryvel'ev, *Lenin o religii* [Lenin on religion] (Moscow: IPL, 1960), pp.182-183.

Plenary Meeting of the Communist Party agreed to form the Anti-religious Committee, which designed several projects for researching sectarians in the USSR.[44] However, these projects were never completed.

At the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s, a number of books on Russian sectarianism were published.[45] They had a very clear ideological character and obviously were a part of the plan of Communists to extirpate religion. Often they followed the common scheme evident in Stalin's propaganda, which was to cause fear by talking about the enormous growth of the enemies of Communism. The influence of sectarians was exaggerated in those books in order to generate paranoia. The regime realized that it was easier to accomplish its aims in this way rather than to try to convince Christians of atheism's advantages. During the process of severe religious persecution, no one cared about studying religion in any serious way. As a result, one can hardly find any meaningful work on Russian sectarianism during Stalin's period or in the early Khrushchev era.[46]

Academic publications on Evangelical Christians and Baptists began to appear only in the late 1960s. Studies of Baptists were concentrated in two departments of the Academy of Science of the USSR: the Institute of History and the Institute of Philosophy. Research on the topic was published in academic journals such as "Issues of scientific atheism" (*Voprosi nauchnogo ateizma*) and "Issues of the history of atheism and religion" (*Voprosi istorii religii i ateizma*), and in the popular magazine "Science and religion" (*Nauka i religiya*). In virtually all the publications authors used only one research method: so-called "dialectical materialism". This approach relied upon the Marxist theory of the struggle of social classes. Baptists were considered to be a relic of the past, a group of petty bourgeoisie. According to Lenin (as his works were cited by anti-sectarian authors) the evangelical movement emerged as a reaction of poorer people to the crises of feudalism.[47] Their faith was no more than an unconscious protest against the dominance of the aristocracy and rich capitalists. After the Communist revolution (so those holding this perspective argued), the role of sectarians

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[44] A.I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.)* [History of religious sectarianism in Russia] (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), p. 32.

[45] E.g. F.M. Putintsev, *Politicheskaia rol' i taktika sekt* [The Political role and tactics of sects] (Moscow: 1935); M. Chudnovcev, *Politicheskaia rol' tserkvi i sektantov v SSSR* [The political role of the church and sects in the USSR] (Moscow: "Bezbozhnik", 1930), A.I. Klibanov, *Social'noie litso sovremennogo khristianstva* [The social face of modern sectarianism] (Leningrad: Priboi, 1930).

[46] I am not taking into account here propagandistic publications of a popular nature which were produced in abundance throughout this period.

[47] A typical account of this doctrine can be found in F. Fedorenko, *Sekty, ikh vera I dela* [Sects, their faith and deeds] (Moscow: IPL, 1965), pp. 3-20.

became reactionary because their religious ideology preserved obsolete ideals of morality and social order (for example, defending the importance of private property). In other words, Baptist identity was rooted in the social position of the believers.

One of the most famous works in Soviet religious studies of sectarianism was the book "Baptists",[48] produced by Lev Mitrokhin. He was considered to be the leading specialist on Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the Soviet Union. This book was written from a "philosophical" (that is, ideological) perspective. The author is predisposed to represent the Baptist movement as an expression of a bourgeois spirit which would inevitably suffer from a deep inner crisis in Communist society.[49] Such an ideologically biased approach certainly reduced the academic value of the work. Since Mitrokhin's use of foreign sources was quite limited,[50] the Russian story embodied for him the whole Baptist world. As he saw it, his book was the first one to contain a systematic analysis of the doctrines and ethics of Baptists. In his research the author focused his attention on the social position of Baptist churches in the USSR, stressing differences between the Baptist movement and Communist social ideals. This seems to be the weakest aspect of his approach, since it caused him to consider the movement from a perspective that did not represent its own genuine interests and aspirations. After Perestroika, Mitrokhin revised his view and issued a book in which he tried to refine his previous presentation, eliminating what he now saw as Communist biases.[51] Nevertheless his view of Baptists as people whose spirituality was basically corrupted by choosing wrong values did not change.

Trends in historical studies of the Russian sectarianism are best represented in the works of A.I. Klibanov and G.S. Lyalina. A. Klibanov, professor at the Institute of History, was the founder of a new wave of sectarian studies in Russia. To a great extent he had shared the fate of those about whom he was writing. Klibanov, a student of the famous ethnographer N. Matorin, had spent a long time in concentration camps (GULAG) during Stalin's period.[52] Although he could not avoid the influence of Marxist and Leninist methods in social studies, ideology was not the heart of his work. He studied sects primarily from an ethnographic point

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[48] L.N. Mitrokhin, *Baptizm* [Baptists] (Moscow: IPL, 1966).

[49] Ibid. pp. 20-38.

[50] He does refer to English sources at the beginning of his book when he writes about the origins of the Baptist movement.

[51] L.N. Mitrokhin, *Baptizm: istoriia i sovremennost'* [Baptists: history and modernity] (St. Petersburg: IRKhGI, 1997).

[52] M.V. Dmitriev, *Nauchnoe nasledie A.I. Klibanova i perspektivy sravnitel'no-istoricheskogo izucheniia istorii khristianstva v Rossii* [The scientific legacy of A.I. Klibanov and perspectives of comparative historical study of the history of Christianity in Russia], in *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 1997, no. 1, pp. 77-89.

of view, seeking to preserve the unique flavour of ethnic and religious minorities which were rapidly disappearing. Thus he wrote virtually nothing about the AUCECB, since contemporary expressions of spirituality were not of great interest to him. The history of older Russian traditional 'heretical' groups, such as Molokans, *Khlisty,* and *Dukhobori,* constituted the heart of Klibanov's real interests. Nevertheless, in his foundational volumes, "Religious sectarianism and modernity",[53] and especially "History of religious sectarianism in Russia", [54] Klibanov provides a scheme of development of Russian evangelicalism that became a standard for ECB authors. For example, he proposes the idea of three centres of origin of evangelicalism in the Russian empire, in southern Russia, the Caucasus and St. Petersburg, an idea later reproduced in books and articles by ECB authors. [55]

The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists was considered in detail in a book by Klibanov's student, G.S. Lyalina, in her "Baptists: illusions and reality".[56] Unfortunately Lyalina, unlike her teacher, was a dogmatic Marxist. In the book, the ideological scheme clearly dominates over the history. Lyalina's main point consists in demonstrating, at least to her satisfaction, how the bourgeois nature of Baptists leads to inevitable internal crises. For example, she tries to prove that the split in AUCECB, which in reality was provoked by the brutal intervention of the atheistic government, was due to inner contradictions between a capitalist morality confessed by the believers and the Communist realities of their day-to-day lives.[57] There were other authors who produced publications on the ECB, such as A.Yarigin,[58] and V. Kuroyedov, who was for a considerable time the president of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC).[59] The publications of those authors reflected the official position of the Communist Party. The goal was to demonstrate the truth of the theory

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[53] A.I. Klibanov, *Religioznoe sektantstvo i sovremennost'* [Religious sectarianism and modernity] (Moscow: "Nauka", 1969).

[54] A.I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.)*[History of religious sectarianism in Russia (from the 1860s to 1917)] (Moscow: Nauka, 1965).

[55] Ibid., pp. 187-211.

[56] G.S. Lialina, *Baptizm: illiuzii i real'nost'* [Baptists: illusions and reality] (Moscow: IPL, 1977).

[57] Ibid., pp. 166-167

[58] A. Yarigin, *Kharakter sovremennoi baptistskoi propovedi* [The character of modern Baptist preaching] (in *Voprosi nauchnogo ateizma*, no. 12б, 1979, pp. 149-163)

[59] See, for example, V.A. Kuroedov, *Religiia i cerkov' v sovetskom obshchestve* [Religion and the church in Soviet society] (2-e izd., dop., Moscow: Politizdat, 1984). Kuroyedov did not write any work specifically on the AUCECB but he knew it very well and his books and articles often included material about it.

that although believers had freedom of conscience (so the Communists alleged), religion in the socialistic state would ultimately disappear.

Alongside the few academic studies there are a great many propagandistic articles, brochures, and books which "unmasked" the capitalist character of the ECB and predicted its imminent collapse. In 1960, Alexander Karev wrote in his diary (which was reproduced in 1999 in *BV*): "Every week a new publication about the ECB appears. It seems that the Baptist movement becomes the main topic in the Soviet press."[60] Often what was written, or presented in film, contained crude falsifications in order to discredit believers.[61] The contrast between the writings of those within the ECB on the one hand and the Communist writers on the other was stark. ECB writers wanted to affirm the truly Russian identity of the ECB, while from the Communist perspective Baptists were alien to Soviet society. Yet both groups of writers failed to probe the inner dynamics of the AUCECB.

No serious works about the AUCECB as a body were written by those outside the movement after the fall of the Soviet Union. [62] Any publications in this more recent period which made reference to the ECB story were usually found in regional histories. Historians of modern Russia such as A.I. Savin, in his study of evangelical churches in Siberia between the two world wars, have written about the persecution of evangelical believers by the Communist authorities.[63] This represents an important development in historical studies.

3. Works of authors who wrote outside Russia.

An interest in Evangelical Christians and Baptists existed not only inside the Soviet Union but also on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Their history attracted the attention of Western

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[60] A.V. Karev, 'Dnevnik' [Diary], *Bratsky Vestnik* [hereafter in the footnotes *BV*], vol.1(1999), p.48

[61] Also in 1960, Karev wrote in his diary: 'How monstrous is the slander in the film *Tuchi nad Borskom* [Clouds over Borsk]! In this film Baptists crucify a girl named Olya on the cross!' Ibid., p.50.

[62] I am not taking into account works that study ECB indirectly, such as the dissertation by Nadezhda Beliakova, *Evoliutsiia otnoshenii vlasti i khristianskikh denominatsii v Belorussii, Ukraine i respublikakh Pribaltiki v poslednei chetverti XX – nachale XXI vv.*[The evolution of the relations between the authorities and Christian denominations in Belorussian, Ukraine and the Baltic republics in the second quarter of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century] (Ph.D. dissertation, Moscow State University, Moscow, 2009).

[63] One of the best examples of such the studies is A.I. Savin, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i evangel'skie cerkvi Sibiri v 1920-1940 gg.: Dokumenty i materially* [The Soviet state and evangelical churches in Siberia, 1920-1940] (Novosibirsk: "Posokh", 2004).

authors.[64] People from the West often had different concerns when writing about the ECB. First, there were Russian émigrés who attempted to preserve their identity in a situation of almost complete isolation from their native culture. As might be expected, they mainly wrote about the past history of the evangelical movement in Russia. Very often their work was akin to personal memoirs. A good example of a writer employing this kind of approach is L. Shenderovskii, of the Canadian Evangelical Christians. He wrote in a popular rather than academic style.[65] Shenderovskii was one of leaders of the Evangelical Christians and focused especially on the leadership of Ivan Prokhanov. His account is quite valuable, but like other emigrant authors he did not have access to information about the contemporary situation of the ECB in the USSR. He could not write anything meaningful about what was happening within the ECB after WWII.

The life of Soviet Baptists was of interest to other people. For example, different evangelical organizations, for instance the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) or the Mennonite Central Committee, tried to monitor the religious situation in the USSR. The AUCECB also attracted the attention of some journalists who wrote about religious issues,[66] and of professional opponents of Communism.[67] For the purposes of interpreting ECB life, the most important writers are those that undertake their analysis with an understanding of evangelical spirituality. In general, receiving sufficient reliable information was the major problem for all who wrote on the AUCECB, especially in the early years of the All-Union Council. Thus the number of publications is not very high and what is written is brief. However, in 1954 the AUCECB invited the British Baptist, F. Townley Lord, then president of the BWA, to visit the Soviet Union. This was the first BWA contact of a face-to-face nature with the AUCECB. Townley Lord was accompanied by W.O. Lewis, an American who was the BWA Commissioner for Europe, and Ernest A. Payne, the General Secretary of the Baptist Union

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[64] Hereafter the words 'West' or 'Western' are used in the context of the stand-off between Communism and influential democratic states, principally the countries of Europe (except the Socialist ones) and North America.

[65] See L. Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi)* [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian church] (Toronto: Canadian Union of Evangelical Christians, 1980).

[66] E.g. E.E. Plowman, 'Confronting the Kremlin', in *Christianity Today*, 28 February, 1975, pp. 41-42; 'Revival spreads in Soviet churches despite government opposition', in *Christianity Today*, 23 November, 1984, pp. 34-36.

[67] E.g. R. Wurmbrand, *Marx and Satan* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1987).

of Great Britain. This event was well covered in the world press and Townley Lord wrote about it in his book *World Baptist Fellowship* (1955).[68]

The publication of books offering a systematic examination of the situation of the AUCECB started only in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Steve Durasoff wrote *The Russian Protestants; Evangelicals in the Soviet Union, 1944-1964* in 1969,[69] and two years later Michael Bourdeaux, who was to become a significant commentator, produced the widely-read *Faith on Trial in Russia*.[70] In 1974 Ernest Payne produced *Out of Great Tribulation: Baptists in the USSR*. As well as his Baptist roles, Payne was a president of the World Council of Churches, and visited the USSR four times between 1954 and 1972. His book on the Soviet Baptists was a short one (63 pages), but about one-third was devoted to the AUCECB and Payne wrote as a careful historian.[71] In the same year Trevor Beeson wrote *Discretion and Valour*, a report on religion in Eastern Europe for the British Council of Churches.[72] In this period several institutes devoted to studies of religion in Communist countries were established.[73] Among these, the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism (later called Keston College and then Keston Institute) was the most important for ECB studies. Keston College, like other similar organizations, attempted to collect and analyze materials leaked to the West through the Iron Curtain. The results appeared in its publications, particularly in its periodicals *Religion in Communist Lands* (later renamed *Religion, State and Society*) and *Keston News Service*. These studies ranged widely, and included some articles on the AUCECB.[74] Associated books also appeared.[75] Keston's

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[68] F. Townley Lord, *World Baptist Fellowship* (London: Carey Kingsgate Pres, 1955), p. 113.

[69] S. Durasoff, *The Russian Protestants; Evangelicals in the Soviet Union, 1944-1964* (Rutherford, Tenn.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1969). In fact this book contributed virtually nothing to existing knowledge of the history of the AUCECB.

[70] Michael Bourdeaux, *Faith on Trial in Russia* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

[71] Ernest A. Payne, *Out of Great Tribulation: Baptists in the USSR* (London; Baptist Union, 1974).

[72] Trevor Beeson, *Discretion and Valour* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). See pp. 98-101, which looks at Baptists under 'Sects of Soviet Origin'.

[73] Sawatsky, pp. 392-393.

[74] For example, K. Murray, 'The Council of Baptist Prisoners' Relatives 1974-1972', in *Religion in* Communist *Lands*[hereafter *RCL*], No. 1, 1973, pp.12-16; 'Death of a Baptist Musician', in *RCL*, No. 2, 1974, pp. 8-10;, M. Rowe, 'Pentecostal Documents from the USSR', in *RCL*, No. 3, 1975, pp.14-23; 'Soviet Pentecostals: Movement for Emigration', in *RCL*, No. 5, 1977, pp.170-174; 'The 1979 Baptist Congress in Moscow: A Western Observer Reports', in *RCL*, No. 8, 1980, pp.188-196 App., pp.196-200; and W. Sawatsky, 'Russian Baptists hold a Congress', in *RCL*, No. 3, 1975, pp.12-15; 'Bible Work in Eastern Europe since 1945', in *RCL*, P.1, No. 3, 1975, pp.4-14, and P.2, No. 3, 1975, pp. 4-10; 'The New Soviet Law on Religion', in *RCL*, No. 4/2, 1976, pp.4-10); 'Secret Soviet Lawbook on Religion', in *RCL*, No. 4, 1980, pp. 24-34. As can be seen

unique collection of materials on the ECB's history fostered serious research. Michael Bordeaux was its founder and first Director, serving as president of Keston after his retirement from direct employment.[76] The sphere of his interests was broad, but he took a particular interest in the history of the AUCECB. [77]

Many works by foreign authors in the 1970s and 1980s were of a popular nature.[78] However, there was a Th.D. dissertation in 1978 by Alexander de Chalandeau "The Theology of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR as reflected in the *Bratsky Vestnik*».[79] This seems to be the only piece of research of that time that considers the AUCECB primarily as an evangelical group and not a political force. At the same time, the value of this work is limited by its simplistic methodology. De Chalandeau clearly expected to find strict accuracy in the exposition of the theological views of the ECB on the pages of *Bratsky Vestink*.[80] He then attempted an exposition of ECB theology, although his approach differs from that in the official confession of faith accepted by the ECB.[81] He failed to find the consistent theological system which he was looking for and he claimed that such a system did not exist.[82] In his investigation, however, he missed many important points. For example, he

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from this list, the authors wrote extensively about the underground work of independent Pentecostals or the Council of Churches of the ECB (CCECB). This latter group came out of the Reform Baptists and the dissent at the beginning of the 1960s.

[75] I have already made reference to Walter Sawatsky's *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II*. See more below.

[76] W.J.V. Heuvel, *The Future of Freedom in Russia* (Radnor: Templeton Foundation Press, 2000), p.165.

[77] For example, M. Bourdeaux, *Risen Indeed: Lessons in faith from the USSR* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983).

[78] For example, there was a series of popular books by Kent Hill who wrote about the struggle against religion in the USSR: *Soviet Union on the brink: an inside look at Christianity & Glasnost* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1984); *Puzzle of the Soviet Church: An Inside Look at Christianity and Glasnost* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1989); *Turbulent times for the Soviet Church: the inside story* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1991).

[79] Th.D. dissertation, Universite des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg, Faculte de Theologie Protestante, 1978.

[80] De Chalandeau consecutively considered the following parts of ECB doctrine: the word of God (from p. 66), the doctrine of God (from p. 71), anthropology (from p. 77), soteriology (from p. 85), pneumatology (from p. 5), eschatology (from p. 111) and ecclesiology (from p. 121).

[81] This was a confession written by Ivan Kargel, one of the leaders of the Union of Evangelical Christians (see chapter 6 of this thesis. De Chalandeau knew only two confessions of the ECB: Kargel's and Vasliliy Pavlov's (which was not in use in the 1970s).

[82] De Chalandeau, 'The Theology of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR', pp. 221-223.

seems unaware of the curriculum of the Bible Correspondence Courses. He does not mention Vitaly Kulikov as the chief editor of *Bratsky Vestnik*; instead he lists the official editors of the periodical such as Alexei Bichkov,[83] who was not involved in the routine work of publishing.[84] The work contains a number of inaccuracies and mistakes.[85] So De Chalandeau's work, overall, is rather disappointing.

Probably the most significant book about the AUCECB written outside of Russia and by a foreigner in the 1970s-1980s was by the Mennonite scholar, Walter Sawatsky - *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (1981). In his research, Sawatsky made extensive use of materials provided by Keston College as well as his own experience after multiple visits to the Soviet Union.[86] Sawatsky considers the ECB from different perspectives and in its different aspects. He investigates closely the history of how the AUCECB appeared as a denomination and its further development. Sawatsky even considers quite specific questions of ECB life, such as its foreign connections,[87] youth policy,[88] and theological preferences.[89] Although the book is written at a properly academic level, some points of criticism can be made.

The approach adopted by Sawatsky, which is not untypical for "Western" authors, is based on the idea that the formative element of ECB identity consists in surviving within an atheistic state, seeking to live in opposition to Communist ideology. In other words, Sawatsky, like his Soviet colleagues, employs to a considerable extent an applied sociological approach (although not an ideological approach) and describes the ECB as a minority social and religious group oppressed by the Communist majority. Sawatsky noted the scheme that is followed in many books on the ECB:

> There is a battle going on in the Soviet Union – a life-and-death struggle between the forces of evil and the forces of good. The evil forces are personified in the Communist leadership which is capable of the most perfidious action to attain its ends. The good is personified in a church of heroic martyrs who refuse to submit to state demands.[90]

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[83] General Secretary of the AUCECB from 1972 to 1991.

[84] De Chalandeau, 'The Theology of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR', pp. 37-42.

[85] For example, he claims that A. Bichkov was born in 1894 (p. 37). This was the date of birth of his father, Mikhail Bichkov.

[86] Sawatsky, pp. 9-10.

[87] Ibid., pp. 359-388.

[88] Ibid., pp. 297-336

[89] Ibid., pp. 337-358

[90] Ibid., pp.11-12

In general Sawatsky affirmed this perspective, although he recognised that it was simplistic.[91] As a result of following this way of thinking, "Western" evangelical discourse has similarities with Communist discourse in focusing on political and social issues as playing a leading role in the life of the Soviet evangelicals. But it is arguable that the political problems with the Soviet regime were not the central issue for these evangelicals.

Other issues include Sawatsky's lack of information about life in the USSR and (more crucially) a basic misunderstanding of Soviet mentality. As a consequence there are some distortions of perspective in his historical analysis. For example, in his opinion the pivotal event in the history of ECB was the split in the AUCECB which produced the Reform Baptists.[92] Indeed, the history written by Sawatsky is to a large extent the history of this split. There is no doubt that the division was of great importance in its initial phase, but by the 1970s and the 1980s (when Sawatsky wrote) it had lost its defining significance. In fact, the new leadership of the AUCECB had not been directly involved in the conflict. By then the AUCECB had little or no contact with the "underground" union of the Reform Baptists (the Council of Churches of the ECB), because of the CCECB refusal to deal with the AUCECB on the grounds of what it saw as the latter's compromise with the state. The problem of the dissent was much more interesting to the atheist authorities and also to Western researchers than for a great number of ECB members. For the first group, the dissent proved the crisis of religion; for the second, it embodied a protest of Soviet believers against Communism.

c. The AUCECB as a hermeneutical community

The AUCECB was clearly a religious group with defined structure, beliefs, accepted norms and practices, and a distinctive development within a specific historical context. But studies which have looked at the AUCECB through the lens of crises and dissent, political persecution or clashes, can miss something important.[93] Such approaches miss the inner world of the people involved, their perception of reality, their values, aspirations, and convictions. Russian evangelicals did not see themselves involved in a class struggle as depicted in Marxist literature. Nor did they identify themselves as religious dissenters. The

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[91] Sawatsky said that such an approach was simplistic in many aspects, but he claims that the evidence for 'a life-and-death struggle for faith in the Soviet Union is overpowering'. Ibid., p.11

[92] Two chapters of his work focus exactly in this dissent (Ibid., pp.121-199).

[93] This approach is connected with the demand for 'objectivity' in the writing of history. This was traditional for Soviet historical science. A more balanced view is that history must combine objective data with subjective perception of the data since it deals with human personalities. This view is presented in the article by John H.Y. Briggs: 'God, Time and History', in T. Dowley, ed., *The History of Christianity. A Lion Handbook* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 1990), pp. 14-25.

majority of them never opposed the Soviet regime in any active way. They simply lived their lives, seeking to survive in their circumstances and confess their faith. The present dissertation will try to follow an alternative way in describing the history of the AUCECB. I propose to look at one aspect of ECB life which really mattered to all its members: their reading of the Bible. I will argue that understanding the reception and use of biblical texts by the ECB community is of crucial significance in understanding the community's spiritual identity.

The idea that the study of the process of reading the Bible in church communities helps in understanding those communities is not a new one. There are a number of works that investigate interrelations between biblical hermeneutics and Christian theology.[94] In so-called pastoral hermeneutics the subject of study is connections between the biblical message and church practices.[95] Another popular trend in Bible study is the narrative approach, which analyses the Bible as a piece of literary art, paying attention to the ways the Bible affects its readers via different narrative techniques.[96] A number of these approaches can be unified under the title "reader-response" criticism.

Reader-response studies concentrate not so much on the textual features of the Bible, or its origin, as the reactions of people to the text.[97] Reader-response may consider different aspects of those reactions.[98] But a detailed survey of reader-response is beyond the goals of the present thesis. The most important idea for this study is the notion of an interpretative community, an idea explored by Stanley Fish in his 'Interpreting the *Variorum*'.[99] The concept of interpretative community implies that readers' perception of any text is a result of their belonging to a certain social entity which defines the modes of that perception. Scholars have applied the notion of interpretative community in relation to Bible studies. A good

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[94] An exhaustive survey of history of theological hermeneutics and its modern trends is presented in W.G. Jeanrond, *Theological hermeneutics* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1991), and in A.C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of doctrine* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2007).

[95] A.C. Thiselton, *New horizons in hermeneutics* (London: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 556-619.

[96] E.g. M. Sternberg, *The poetics of biblical narrative: Ideological literature and the drama of reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

[97] Thiselton, *New horizons in hermeneutics*, pp. 515-516.

[98] For example, Anthony Thiselton, using pastoral hermeneutics, finds ten different ways of undertaking Bible reading. Ibid., pp. 556-557.

[99] S. Fish, 'Interpreting the *Variorum*', in his, *Is There A Text in This Class*? *The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard U. Press, 1980), pp. 147–174.

example of this as applied to Bible studies within a congregation is in the popular exposition presented by David Clines in his book *The Bible and the Modern World*.[100]

Clines proposes a model of biblical hermeneutics in which reading and interpretation of the Bible become one of the pivotal characteristics of identity of any Christian congregation. In his view, an "interpretational community" is responsible for shaping each distinct way of understanding the Bible. Clines writes:

> If we ask who it is that authorizes or legitimates an interpretation, who it is that says something may count as an interpretation and not be ruled out of court, the answer can only be: some group, some community, some collective that is in the business of counting and that holds court, ruling interpretations in or out. Solipsistic interpretations may be fun for their inventors, but if there is no group who will accept them, they don't survive. Some interpretations are authorized by our professional societies, some by the ecclesiastical community, but most by little sub-groups within these communities.[101]

Clines compares biblical interpretation to clothing which each person buys, according to size and preference, and which says much about a person's shape and predilections.[102] Thus the way the Bible is used by a given Christian community reveals much about the nature of that community.

I will not discuss Cline's assertion about relativity in biblical interpretation, a view that is in contrast to the thinking of those who search for a universal meaning in biblical theology.[103] Rather I wish to focus on the idea that particular patterns and methods of interpreting the Bible in a certain community can be used in the description of that community. An important task in this work will be to explore the possibility of expressing the identity of the AUCECB through the ways the Bible was used in their publications. In other words, I will try to study the ECB through studying its hermeneutical approach. Yet the hermeneutical work produced by the ECB is not the target *per se*. Rather it is the door through which entry may be made into the inner world of ECB spirituality. I am taking the view that an understanding of how Soviet evangelicals interpreted the Bible will allow a deeper understanding of who they were.

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[100] D.J.A. Clines, *The Bible and the modern world* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[101] Ibid., p. 92

[102] Ibid., p.63

[103] An example of the search for universal meaning in biblical texts is A. Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean? Explaining the Sermon on the Mount and the parables in simple and universal human concepts* (New York: Oxford University Press. 2001).

In pursuing this approach I am not suggesting that biblical hermeneutics has equal importance for all Christian denominations and groups. For example, for the Russian Orthodox Church the Bible is but one element in a rich ecclesiastical heritage.[104] Prominent Orthodox biblical interpreters often played no significant role in the Church and indeed were met with suspicion by the clergy.[105] But with the ECB the picture is completely different. This denomination was orientated to the Bible as the source of its identity. The Bible, and in particular the New Testament, with its presentation of conversion and the changed life (which was crucial in the definition of an "evangelical" movement), formed the core of their mentality. In fact, to be a leader in the ECB meant to shape the spirituality and practices of the whole community by the way the Bible was used. Therefore an understanding of their hermeneutical methods can provide a clue to their inner universe.[106] This method was termed by Andrew Village the "empirical approach",[107] and consisted in observing the hermeneutical approaches spontaneously produced by such church communities.

The ECB leaders interpreted the Bible in many ways and in many different circumstances. In the present thesis I will focus on one form of their hermeneutical practice. I will deal with biblical interpretation as it appears in publications of the AUCECB. There are several reasons for this choice. Firstly, publishing offered the most comprehensive way to spread biblical interpretation. No other method can compare with it in regard to the size of the audience reached. Preaching from pulpits, Bible study groups, even the recording of

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[104] That is why works on Orthodox hermeneutics like A.I. Negrov, *Biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox church: a historical and hermeneutical perspective* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) do not give a complete picture of Orthodox spirituality and communal life.

[105] For example, the publisher of the most famous Orthodox commentaries on the Bible, Alexander Pavlovich Lopukhin, had the very modest rank of *psalomschik* in the Orthodox Church. See *Polnyi pravoslavnyi bogoslovskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* [Complete Orthodox theological encyclopedic dictionary] (vol. 2, St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo P.P.Soikina, 1913), p.1535.

[106] The idea of studying the ways of Bible reading in order to depict the spiritual constitution of part Icular religious groups can be found, for example, in the book by Ian Randall, *What a friend we have in Jesus: The evangelical tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2005), pp. 42-58, with its analysis of Bible reading by British evangelicals. Another example is the article by Adolf Ens, 'Theology of the hermeneutical community in Anabaptist -Mennonite thought', in *The church as the theological community* (Altona, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, 1990), pp. 69-89, in which that method is applied to a characterization of the early Mennonites.

[107] A. Village, *The Bible and lay people: An empirical approach to ordinary hermeneutics* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007), pp.7-10.

sermons,[108] took place in communities of the ECB. But a study of preaching, for example, could not take in the whole of the AUCECB, while *BV* was in use across the Union. Because I am seeking to explore the publications that were read within almost all ECB churches, I will not examine underground or dissident publications - *Samizdat* - which began to appear more than twenty years after the AUCECB had started to publish *BV*. These underground works were unknown to the great majority of ECB believers. Also, although labelled as dissident, in terms of hermeneutical orientation *Samizdat* did not propose anything new compared with what was to be found in the publications of the AUCECB.[109]

The second reason for looking at publications is that publishing produced a certain coherence in biblical interpretation within the churches – or at least the leaders of the churches - that belonged to the AUCECB. It cannot be denied that there was a great variety of methods of Bible reading in the different strata of this heterogeneous Union. The differences could be regional or could be the product of differing historic traditions. Leaders within different sections of the Union, therefore, had their own unique approach to interpretation, sometimes quite exotic interpretation,[110] of biblical texts. But only that which was published in *BV* was known within the AUCECB as a whole.

Thirdly, published materials presented thought-out interpretations of the Bible. Spontaneity is generally reckoned to be one of the Russian national characteristics. Very often the improvisations in the preaching of quite famous preachers puzzled their listeners. But such surprises could have no place in publications. Publishing activity was taken very seriously in the Soviet Union. In some periods of Soviet history individuals were required to have a license to possess typewriters. In the case of *BV* and other published materials there

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[108] For example, a large collection of Karev's sermons are available in the archive of the AUCECB. Partly they are also on the website ecbarchive.org owned by Moscow Theological Seminary.

[109] A comparison of the content of the journal *Vestnik Istiny* of the underground Council of Churches with what was published in *BV* shows that both periodicals presented articles on the same topics, though written by different authors. Thus virtually all the articles in vol. 1, 1983, of *Vestnik Istiny*, had analogies in *BV*, for example *Ischite Tsarstva Nebesnogo* [Look for the Heavenly Kingdom], in *Vestnik Istiny*, vol. 1(1983)p. 5, cf. *Ischite prezhde Tsarstva Bozhiia* [Look primarily for God's Kingdom], *BV*, vol. 2(1964), p. 58; *O vechere Gospodnei* [About the Lord's Supper], in *Vestnik Istiny*, vol. 1 (1983), p. 8, cf. A. Kadaiev, *Vecheria Gospodnia – Khleboprelomleniie* [The Lord's Supper - Communion], *BV*, vol. 3 (1990), p. 10; I.V. Kargel, *Zhertva za grekh* [Sacrifice for sin], in *Vestnik Istiny*, vol. 1 (1983). p. 15, cf. I.V. Kargel, *Zhertva za grekh* [Sacrifice for sin], *BV*, vol. 2 (1949), p. 10 (the text is the same).

[110] I attended an ECB Bible study group where group members tried to find proof for the existence of extraterrestrial life in the Bible. In the context of Soviet ideology this did not seem strange, since everything that went beyond what atheistic ideology asserted looked as if it might support a Christian world-view.

was scrupulous proofreading and verification. Not many texts by evangelicals were able to reach printing houses. That is why most people in the ECB regarded their printed texts with great respect and usually trusted virtually everything that was printed. Articles containing Bible interpretation were accorded special respect by evangelical believers. It would not be fair to claim that printed materials were the only element in the spiritual formation of evangelical believers in the USSR, but, nevertheless, they were among the most influential.

Finally, publications by the AUCECB are the most accessible aspects of the ECB's heritage. The reality is that there is very little concrete information about what teaching and spiritual formation really went on in ECB churches during much of the Soviet period. It is also the case that many AUCECB activities and processes are not documented. For example, it is known that the content of each particular issue of *BV* was discussed between Union leaders and representatives of government authorities. But these discussions took place orally and no records are left.[111] While acknowledging their limitations, *BV* and other publications of the AUCECB are of great value because they seem to constitute the only complete set of information about the ECB. Whilst each issue of *BV* went through a long process of censorship and self-censorship these printed texts allow a sustained analysis of the identity of the ECB.

The present thesis, then, attempts to find ways to describe the identity of the ECB by analyzing how the Bible was interpreted. Identity can have different connotations: it can be understood as a distinguishing characteristic of something, or alternatively as focused in its sameness in different situations.[112] In both cases it is difficult to speak about the identity of

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[111] The correspondence between the AUCECB and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) is preserved in the Central State Archive of the Russian Federation. But documents from that archive are very formal. For instance, some documents contain permissions to purchase paper for printing. This archive contributes very little to an understanding of the content of the dialogue between the ECB and the state. There are extracts from *BV*, such as *Pis'mo VSEKhB v Sovet po voprosu izdaniia religioznoi literatury* [The letter of the AUCECB to the Council about the question of publishing of religious literature] (Nov. 1955, State archive of Russian Federation, D. 44, L. 35-37.109-111, 169-175); translations of articles from foreign sources, which were later were published by the AUCECB, eg. *Perevod stat'i "Nezabyvaiemoie puteshestviie" iz zhurnala "Bapist taims"(Velikobritaniia, 14 oktiabria 1965g) o poseschenii SSSR delegatsiiei baptistov za Velikobritanii* [Translation of the article "Unforgettable trip" from the *Baptist Times* (Great Britain, 14 Oct. 1965), about the visit to the USSR by a delegation from Great Britain], 15 Nov. 1965, State archive of Russian Federation, D. 193, L. 84-87); and drafts of important ideological articles by ECB authors, e.g. *Stat'ia A.V.Kareva "Baptisty Sovetskogo Soiuza i voprosy voiny i mira" dla zhurnala N'ius Vik* [Article of A.V. Karev "Baptists of the Soviet Union and issues of war and peace" for *Newsweek*], State archive of Russian Federation, D. 7., L. 196-198).

[112] F. Lozada, 'Identity', in A.K.M. Adam, ed., *Handbook of postmodern biblical interpretation* (St.Louis, Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 113-119.

Evangelical Christians-Baptists from an historical standpoint because particular geographical or denominational entities or traditions within the ECB possessed their own unique history.[113] The same is true about a doctrinal identity of the ECB, especially because the majority of evangelical groups in the USSR did not hold to any unified theological system. Nor is it adequate to understand the AUCECB only as an administrative entity. I propose to speak of ECB identity as a certain set of specific traits in spirituality, traits that were shared by virtually all members.

The notion of "spirituality" has a broad array of meanings. Kees Waaijman, in his book *Spirituality*,[114] distinguishes between three spiritual forms: lay spirituality determined by personal human development,[115] cultural or conventional spirituality inside spiritual schools,[116] and counter-movements,[117]which imply non-conformist, intuitive spiritual manifestations. Waaijman's approach demonstrates that every type of spirituality is unique. At the same time, Philip Sheldrake presented a general definition of spirituality as "the deepest values and meanings by which people live."[118] In the case of ECB spirituality this means, first of all, the set of views and practices of the believers that allowed them to consider themselves to have a special relationship with God, to be God's people. It includes their individual aspirations and intuitions in their counter-movement, in relation to secular and religious movements in the mainstream society. They were belonging to a special group of people with traditions and social organization. To be an Evangelical Christian-Baptist meant to embrace a certain type of spiritual formation, to demonstrate well-defined behaviour, and to exhibit specific patterns of piety. With such an approach to identity, the devotional Bible-based articles in the publications of the ECB are eminently suited as sources for an analysis of its expression.

I am not arguing that these publications provide the whole picture of the processes which took place in the life of the Soviet evangelicals. Accordingly, this thesis does not claim to represent all aspects of ECB identity, since it is not realistic to study all the diversities and variances in the evangelical movement in the late Soviet period. Rather, the task is to seek to

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[113] Another difficult aspect with the historical identity of the ECB is that the historical tradition of Soviet sectarians was severed from time to time. Quite often churches survived a complete shift of membership. In this sense historical continuity played a limited role in the life of the ECB.

[114] K. Waaijman, *Spirituality: forms, foundations, methods* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002).

[115] Ibid., p. 18.

[116] Ibid. p. 116.

[117] Ibid., p. 212.

[118] P. Sheldrake, *A brief history of spirituality* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Pub., 2007), pp. 1-2.

find components in ECB spirituality that were shared by all groups united by their belonging to the ECB Union. There is good reason to expect that these components are encapsulated in the publications of the AUCECB because these publications were virtually the only instrument the Union leadership had with which to influence all of its parts. This inquiry is about a spiritual model proposed by the leading thinkers of the Union on the pages of *BV* and other publications rather than about the actual embodiment of that model in the life of the whole ECB community.

d. Structure and significance

Although there was a shared approach to the Bible, sometimes the genuine expression of spirituality in the AUCECB publications was mingled with certain dubious or even alien ideas imposed from outside. Like any other religious periodical in the Soviet era, *BV* was published in difficult circumstances. Its editorial board was coping with a number of complex objectives, so its decisions sometimes contradicted each other. Moreover, it was published by non-professional editors. In order successfully to undertake what is of necessity a complex analysis of the content and significance of ECB publications, I propose a three-part structure for the dissertation.

Part 1. The AUCECB: History, Publications and the Bible

This part of the work has a three-fold goal: first to examine the historical background to the life and activities of the AUCECB, second to probe the historical developments which shaped its publications, and, finally, to describe the general method of using the Bible as observed in the publications. The importance of this part consists in presenting a framework which is crucial for an understanding of the analysis of texts in subsequent parts.

Part 2. Major aims in AUCECB publications

The second part of the work will explore different aims in the use of the Bible which appeared on the pages of *BV* and other publications. The goal here is to consider spheres in the life of the ECB where the use of the Bible was significant. There was, firstly, a theological or doctrinal aim which consisted in attempting to protect believers from "heresies" and to deliver an elaboration of doctrine shared by all members of the ECB. In the second place, there was an educational aim: publications were used for training leaders of local communities. This had several dimensions, such as social instructions concerning the organization of local churches and worship services, as well as the provision of materials for

theological education. I will also analyze materials written specifically for the Bible Correspondence Courses. Thirdly, I will deal with a wider, ideologically oriented project, which consisted in maintaining an acceptable place for the ECB within Soviet society. To a great extent this aspect was imposed on the Union from outside. It had several dimensions: from the participation of ECB in politics, especially in pro-Communist peace-making, to different ecumenical activities.

Part 3. The spirituality of the ECB expressed in publications

In the final part I will seek to show that spirituality was the ECB's main concern. Here I will discuss the essence of the ECB's spiritual identity as seen in their publications. Concern for conversions will be seen to be central. The importance of a spirituality frequently expressed in the idea of personal holiness will be demonstrated. I will also consider the ways in which the specific spirituality of the ECB was embodied in their practical hermeneutics within the community. Finally I will propose the crucial concept of the Sacred Grand Narrative.

As noted throughout this introduction, scholarly materials on the AUCEB are limited. In addition to the books noted, there is a bibliography on Russian evangelicals, including the ECB, in English: Albert Wardin's *Evangelical sectarianism in the Russian empire and the USSR*.[119] A specific bibliography on ECB is available in Russian. This is included in an article by Mikhail Odintsov, "Documental materials about activity of Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union, kept in the State archive of the Russian Federation."[120]

This dissertation has been written in Russia and is designed to be helpful in understanding Russian evangelicals. In my approach I have relied to some extent on thinking and terminology proposed by prominent Russian historians and philologists, such as Alexey Losev,[121] Mikhail Bakhtin,[122] Vladimir Toporov,[123] and Olga Prokhvatilova.[124] At the same

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[119] Lanham, MD.: The Scarecrow Press, 1995.

[120] M.I. Odintsov, *Dokumental'nyie materially o deiatel'nosti ob''edinenii evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v Sovetskom Soiuze, nakhodiaschiiesia na khranenii v Gosudarstvennom archive Rossiiskoi Federatsii*[Documentary materials about the activity of the Unions of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union, kept in the State archive of the Russian Federation], in *Svoboda sovesti v Rossii* (Moscow: Rossiiskoie ob''edineniie issledovatelei religii,2007), pp. 164-178.

[121] Losev was one of the most prominent Russian philosophers of the twentieth century. As a specialist in Greek classical philosophy he proposed a philosophical system which combined Platonic ideas and Orthodox mystical practices.

time, I have tried to analyse this material in a way that presents its significance to those outside the sphere of Russian culture and history. The majority of materials used in this dissertation were originally written in Russian. All titles and other Russian-language items have an English translation. Original Russian titles can be found in the literature list. All translations, if not specified otherwise, are made by the author of the dissertation. The transliterations used in this work follow the system accepted by the Library of Congress.[125]

e. Conclusion

The central issue of this investigation is how the AUCECB's Bible-orientated spirituality was expressed in its publications, particularly in *BV*. This has not been examined before. The story of the AUCECB, when it has been covered at all, has been looked at by those who had perspectives that did not include this approach in their thinking. These various perspectives are to be found in writers from within the ECB, in atheistic commentators, and in sympathizers outside Russia. Despite their widely differing stand-points, and in many cases the seriousness of their intentions, these writers all failed to seek to understand the inner mentality of the ECB. The task undertaken here, of reading the articles in *B*V and seeking to understand the way the Bible was being interpreted, is a task that requires care. *BV* had many facets. It is quite easy to misrepresent this periodical by choosing one aspect of its materials and ignoring its other aspects. That is why an adequate study of *BV* and its approach to the Bible demands a scrupulous examination of all the layers within its articles, and a sustained attempt to place them in their historical contexts. Only in this way will the nature of the AUCECB as a hermeneutical community be determined.

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[122] Mikhail Bakhtin was a Russian philologist. He is famous for his critical works on Dostoievsky and Rabelais. He is known as one of the founders of the theory of functional genres: see C.A. Newson, 'Bakhtin', in A.K.M. Adam, ed., *Handbook of postmodern biblical interpretation* (St.Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 20-27.

[123] A Russian historian, Toporov is famous for his studies of ancient Russian holiness movements.

[124] Dr. Olga Prokhvatilova is a leading specialist in Russian Orthodox preaching. She is a professor of philology in Volgograd State University.

[125] Except where names and idioms have gained a stable spelling in English (like Tolstoy instead of Tolstoi in the LC transliteration system).

Part I. The history of publications of the AUCECB

Chapter 2

Historical background of ECB publications

a. Introduction

The history of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) began with the All-Union Congress (Conference)[1] of Evangelical Christians and Baptists which took place in October 1944. The same date marks the beginning of the publishing activity of the new denomination. Almost certainly the preparatory work for *Bratsky Vestnik* began at the end of this conference and culminated in the publication of the journal's first issue during the winter of 1945. But the AUCECB did not commence its history with a blank page. At the 1944 starting point, the identity of the ECB rested on expressions of Russian evangelicalism stretching back to the 1860s. This chapter examines the central feature of this history, and also traditions and trends in publishing, thus seeking to set the AUCECB and its publishing activities in context and to begin the task of understanding the AUCECB's identity.

b. Sectarian movements in Russia

The historical identity of Russian evangelicals has been and remains a controversial issue. In the recent thesis by Andrei Puzynin, "The tradition of the Gospel Christians: A study of their identity and theology during the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet periods",[2] the author demonstrates the broad spectrum of opinion concerning the origin and early history of Bible believers in Russia. In his attempt to ground the identity of the modern movements of Evangelical Christians in the heritage of English evangelicals, such as Lord Radstock, Puzynin discusses and criticizes a considerable number of other opinions. Puzynin's strong emphasis on the role of English evangelicalism within the Russian story can be subjected to criticism.[3] Nonetheless his work is valuable, principally for the way it demonstrates that no

[1] It had the name *soveshchanie*, which can be translated as 'congress' or 'conference'. See 'Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov v Moskve s 26 po 29 oktiabria 1944 g.' [The All-Union congress of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in Moscow from 26 to 29 October 1944], *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 11. Sawatsky argues that this meeting could not have had the status of a congress since its participants were not elected by anyone and did not officially represent their local communities. See Sawatsky, pp. 83-84.

[2] Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 2008.

[3] He does not deal, for example, with the influential role of popular nineteenth-century Russian revival movements based on Molokan traditions.

traditionally reductive scheme regarding the emergence of the Evangelical Christian and Baptist movements in Russia can integrate all related issues.

Whereas Radstock and others came to Russia in the 1870s and stimulated evangelical activity, movements of spiritual renewal in Russia are much older. After the great Orthodox Church reform during the reign of Tsar Alexey Mikhailovich (born 1629, died 1676), there was a movement towards sectarianism within the Russian population.[4] What was termed the Old Believers movement played a very important role in the spiritual life of Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its popularity grew significantly after the social reforms of Peter the Great (Tsar, 1682-1725) when Old Believers gained the status of bearers of Russian traditional spirituality.[5] Although Old Believers considered themselves as preservers of genuine Orthodoxy, historical circumstances forced them to introduce new features to Orthodox doctrine and practice. For example, their lack of ordained priests caused some of them (so-called *Bezpopovtsy*) to develop a system of lay ministers, which was a major deviation from the Byzantine model of Orthodoxy.[6]

It was quite soon after this that conservative sectarianism produced a brand new species of sects usually referred to as Spiritual Christianity. Groups of Spiritual Christians, called *Khristovery*, appeared first in the 1630s but the structured formation of these groups took place only in the eighteenth century.[7] Spiritual Christianity displayed a great variety of forms embodied in a number of independent groups.[8] The only common characteristic of such spiritual communities was a tendency to mysticism and to a piety which was sometimes

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[4] P. Walters, *World Christianity. Eastern Europe* (Monrovia, Calif.: Missions Advanced Research & Communication Center, 1988), p.20.

[5] These developments were noted in some of the post-WWII books produced in English about Russian religious history: R.P. Casey, *Religion in Russia* (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1946), pp. 28-30; S. Bolshakoff, *Russian Nonconformity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), pp. 48-57.

[6] The term *Bezpopovtsy* (lit. 'without priests') was used of different types of movements. See S.A. Zen'kovskii, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo: Dukhovnye dvizheniia semnadtsatogo veka* [Russian Old Believers: Spiritual Movements of the seventeenth century] (Moscow: "Tserkov'", 1995), pp. 438-477.; Bolshakoff, *Russian Nonconformity*, pp. 69-83.

[7] See I. Malakhova, *Dukhovnye khristiane* [Spiritual Christians] (Moscow: IPL, 1970), pp. 9-11).

[8] In the traditional classification, Spiritual Christianity is divided into three subsequent denominations: *Dukhobory* (older form), *Khlisty* (mystical), and *Molokane* (Bible-centered). This classification is supported, for example, by A.I. Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.)*[History of religious sectarianism in Russia] (Moskva: Nauka, 1965). But this classification is quite artificial. It does not reflect the complex relationships between different groups.

expressed in bizarre ways. [9] The Bible did not play a very important role in the life of Spiritual Christians, since they focused more on a personal experience of divine revelation. It could be argued that Spiritual Christians represented popular forms or trends in religious philosophy: it is noteworthy that the famous Russian philosopher Georgiy Skovoroda[10] was reckoned to be the person who first formulated the doctrines of one of the Spiritualist groups, the *Dukhobors*.[11] On the other hand, some trends in Spiritual Christianity came quite close to Bible-based evangelicalism, particularly those observed after the Bible was translated into living Russian (1822).[12] Thus the group of Molokans, called *Zakharovtsy*, or evangelical Christians,[13] or the Second Connection from the Don-river, differed little from the *Stundists* or Baptists, and some of them joined the Russian Baptist Union towards the end of the nineteenth century.[14]

Normally new Russian sects of various kinds would appear spontaneously under the influence of a charismatic leader with a personal mission.[15] It was often the case that they were unable to formulate their convictions with any clarity. Sometimes they imitated each other, simply adding certain specific ideas or practices. Many, probably the majority, of the smaller groups disappeared with the death of their founding members, while other new sects came into being. Almost without exception, sectarian groups in Russia encountered severe persecution from the totalitarian Tsarist regime whereas mainstream Russian Orthodoxy was an integral part of the state system. As a result, sectarianism in Russia, although essentially

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[9] For example, members of a *Dukhobory* group called *Skoptsy* practiced self-sterilization as an expression of their piety. See A.F. Heard, *The Russian church and Russian dissent, comprising orthodoxy, dissent, and erratic sects* (New York: Harper & brothers, 1887), pp. 270-273.

[10] Skovoroda was one of the first philosophers in Russia. See V.V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* [History of Russian Philosophy] (Moscow: EKSMO-PRESS; Khar'kov: Folio, 2001), pp. 48-72.

[11] His authorship was proposed in 1882 by Oleg Novitskii in *Dukhobortsy. Ikh istoriia i verouchenie* [Dukhobors. Their life and teaching] (Kiev: Zh., 1882), p.230. However, Novitskii's work seems quite speculative.

[12] The first translation of the Bible was made by the Russian Bible Society sponsored by Emperor Alexander I in the 1820s. (Bolshakoff, *Russian Nonconformity*, pp. 131-132).

[13] In the early twentieth century the name Evangelical Christians was used by followers of Ivan Prokhanov, while the group mentioned here disappeared and its members mostly returned to the Orthodox Church (*HECB*, p. 71). The Evangelical Christians among the Molokans in the nineteenth century and the Evangelical Christians of the early twentieth century only had their name in common.

[14] Bolshakoff, *Russian Nonconformity*, pp. 111-112.

[15] As an example, *Ephimiy*, an illiterate soldier in the Russian Army, started a significant movement which was monastic in its features, *Beguny*, among the Old Believers. See A. Katunskii, *Staroobriadchestvo* [Old Believers] (Moscow: IPL, 1972), pp. 39-40.

bound up with issues of spirituality, usually had a flavour of social protest.[16] To this extent the history of Russian sectarianism is a history of constantly recurring clashes between sects and the state.

c. The rise of evangelical and Baptist movements in Russia

The evangelical movements in Russia which flowed into the AUCECB originated and took shape in the second half of the nineteenth century, beginning in the 1860s. In the classic scheme proposed by Klibanov,[17] there were three tributaries/contributors,[18] which all played a part in shaping the evangelical and Baptist movements in Russia: 1) Molokans in the region of the Caucasus in the 1860s; 2) peasants influenced by German colonists in the South of Ukraine in the same period; and 3) St Petersburg aristocrats converted during the revival in high society inspired by the preaching of Lord Radstock in the 1870s.[19] Although this scheme has analytical merit it is important to understand its limits. Johannes Dyck is among those noting that "archives present a surprisingly multicoloured picture of the revival in Russia…".[20] The tripartite theory of the origins of Russian evangelicals cannot be found in works written before the October Revolution or even in those written right after World War II. For example, R.P. Casey,[21] who wrote in 1946 about the history of Russian Protestantism, claimed that the main figure among the *Stundists* in their early period (before the formation of evangelical unions in the late 1870s) was A.I. Stefanovich from Chernovtsy.[22] *Istoria evangeliskikh khristian-baptistov* [History of Evangelical Christian-Baptists'] issued by the AUCECB does not even mention this person in its account of ECB history, indicating the difficulties of tracing the origins in detail.

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[16] The social preaching of *Ephimiy*, for example, often dominated the religious rhetoric: Katunskii, *Staroobriadchestvo*, p. 40.

[17] Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.)*, pp. 189-190.

[18] Sometimes authors like to distinguish between the revival in areas neighbouring German colonies and in Kherson province in Ukraine. (Savinsky, Part I, pp. 95-100). This categorization produces four tributaries. It is true that the revival movements in these two regions were quite independent. At the same time, the regions were very close to each other and it is reasonable to speak about revival in Southern Ukraine in general.

[19] One of the clearest accounts of this scheme in its refined form can be found in J. Anderson, *Historia de los Bautistas* (vol. 2, El Paso, TX: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1990), pp. 330-334 .

[20] J. Dyck, 'Revival and Baptist beginnings in Russia', *Baptistic Theologies*, Prague, 2009, pp.14-22, p.17.

[21] Casey, *Religion in Russia*, pp. 40-42.

[22] A city in the north of Ukraine.

To further illustrate the complexities of Russian evangelical history, Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, in his almanac on Russian sects, presents a handwritten testimony by a representative of a typical *Stundist* group which seems to have had no links with any of the tributaries of the later Russian Baptists.[23] This group came from Pavlovky village in the Russian-speaking Sumy region in the North of Ukraine, far from any of the known evangelical centres. The conversion of the believers in this group seems to have taken place by an inner revelation rather than through a preacher. The unknown author of the manuscript writes: "When we started to read the Gospel the knowledge was revealed to us."[24] In other words, the scripture itself shaped this group, without the influence of any outside missionary work in the village. What this does indicate is the perceived power of the Bible and thus there is a link with the wider evangelical movement, although not a formal one.

In many parts of the Russian Empire, what triggered the "heresies" of the sects was the availability of the Bible in the Russian language.[25] The indications are that there were many similar communities which created micro-trends in the evangelical movement in different parts of Russia. Even much later, in the early twentieth century, there were still independent congregations which demonstrated similarity to the main movements among Russian evangelicals but did not belong to them. One example was the group of the so-called Free Christians, led by I. Tregubov.[26] This diversity does not mean that the theory of the three sources of the evangelical movement is false. Rather, it demonstrates that the theory was not so apparent before the appearance of the AUCECB, which summed up the long history of Russian evangelicalism. The standard account of the early history of ECB is indeed the story of those branches inside the kaleidoscope of religious groups in the Russian Empire which had potential to survive and to be transformed into a new denomination in the context of the Communist state.

The idea of three tributaries has been challenged in Sergei Zhuk's *Russia's Lost Reformation*, in which he argues that the radical reformation in Russian started in the 1830s

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[23] Bonch-Bruevich further quotes from the manuscript about how the believers in Pavlovky village endured 'persecutions from pagans for their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ', in *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola Vyp. 3: Shtundisty. - Postniki. Svobodnye khristiane. Dukhovnye skoptsy. Staroobriadtsy* [Materials on history and studies of Russian sectarianism and dissent, part 3: Schtundists, Postnikys, Free Christians, Spiritual Skoptsys, Old Believers], ed. V. Bonch-Bruevich (St. Petersburg, 1910), pp. 186-216.

[24] Ibid., p.186.

[25] See J.A. Hebly, *Protestants in Russia* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1976), pp. 41-49.

[26] See V.I. Iasevich-Borodaevskaia, *Bor'ba za veru* [Fight for faith] (St Petersburg, 1912), pp. 578-594.

among the peasants of Southern and Central Russia (Tambov and Kursk).[27] This theory might seem to call for a completely fresh look at evangelical origins, but the peasants who started the groups Zhuk examines did not have power enough to develop them and they later dissolved into the stronger groups, which in turn produced the twentieth-century AUCECB. Thus to trace the origins of the AUCECB back to the second half of the nineteenth century, rather than earlier, seems justified.

If the idea of the three-fold origin is accepted as a useful interpretative tool, one thing it suggests is that there were ways in which the three main steams achieved a certain stability. The Russian peasants of Southern Ukraine enjoyed the patronage of German Mennonite Brethren,[28] with established leaders who could defend their interests. Among the members of the group in the Caucasus were wealthy businessmen. The St. Petersburg evangelical community included (as will be seen in more detail below) some of the most powerful and wealthy people in the country.[29] State and aristocratic connections, along with international links, were factors that secured great benefits for certain evangelical groups as compared to others. These factors played a positive role in the life of all of these three tributaries, although the dynamics were different for each.

Within the Russian-speaking territory of the Russian Empire, the Baptist movement first appeared among German colonists who lived in the southern regions.[30] German colonies were welcomed by the Russian government, which granted them considerable privileges and freedoms. Although membership in the Orthodox Church was compulsory for the native population of Russia, foreign colonists could freely confess their traditional faiths, Lutheran, Reformed, and Mennonite.[31] The first Baptist congregations in Russia were German-speaking, taking roots in these colonies. Although the colonists did not conduct missionary work among Russians, the local population showed a certain interest in the faith of their neighbours. In 1867, a German Baptist merchant and preacher, Martin Kalweit baptized a young Russian of Molokan origin, Nikita Voronin, in the Kura river near Tbilisi (in today's Georgia). This baptism is considered by the ECB as the official date of birth for Russian

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[27] Sergei I. Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation: Peasants, millennialism, and radical sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830-1917* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004).

[28] Savinsky, Part I, pp. 124-126.

[29] L. Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane: vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khristianskoi tserkvi* [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian church] (Toronto: Izdanie Kanadskogo Soiuza Evangel'skikh Khristian, 1980), pp. 89-98.

[30] W. Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, c1961; London: Macmillan and Co., 1961), pp.275-276.

[31] Constantin de Grunwald, *God and the Soviets* (London: Hutchinson, 1961), pp. 172-174.

Baptists.[32] In 1869, some Russians who had experienced evangelical conversion, including Voronin, organized the first Baptist community in Tbilisi. Among those who belonged to the Tbilisi Baptist church was the future "patriarch" of Russian Baptists, Vasiliy Pavlov. In 1876 Pavlov was ordained in Hamburg by Johann Oncken, the pioneer of the German Baptist movement,[33] during training which Pavlov received in the Baptist mission school in Hamburg.[34] Pavlov became the main founder and the first leader of the Russian Baptist Union.[35]

In a few years Baptist communities also emerged in other parts of the Russian Empire. The missionary efforts of the newly converted played an important role in the rapid spread of Baptist ideas. Thus, the community in Tbilisi kept in touch with believers from Southern Ukraine, especially with Molokan converts in the Tauria region.[36] The leading role of the Baptist church in Tbilisi for the whole Baptist movement can be explained by the fact that members of the church played key roles in the economy of that region. Dei Mazayev owned the largest sheep-breeding business in Russia and later was elected as the senator from North Caucasus to the *Duma* (the parliament of Russia).[37] In consequence, authorities bestowed certain privileges upon that group which were unattainable for poor Baptists and *Stundists* from other parts of Russia. In 1879, the Tsarist government issued a law which legalized the Baptist movement in Russia (the *Makovsky* circular).[38] This law was designed for German Baptists, not for Russians. Nevertheless, local authorities in Tbilisi interpreted it

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[32] This date has been contested. Charles Byford proposed that the Baptist movement in Russia started when Abraham Unger baptized a Ukrainian peasant, Yefim Tsimbal, on 12 June 1869: C.T. Byford, *Peasants and Prophets: Baptist pioneers in Russia and South Eastern Europe* (London: Kingsgate Press, 1914), p. 77. Byford mentioned the baptism of Voronin but he did not think that it was significant since Voronin was just 16 at that time and Byford argued that he could not influence his community (Ibid., pp.79-81).

[33] See G. Balders, *Theurer Bruder Oncken* (Oncken Verlag Wuppertal und Kassel, 1984)

[34] C.T. Byford, *Peasants and Prophets: Baptist pioneers in Russia and South Eastern Europe*, p. 92.

[35] For a long time Dei Mazayev was the formal president of the Baptist Union. He provided the financial resources for the Union's development. But as an active businessman, Mazayev could not fulfill the routine work needed to sustain the Union. Pavlov was the real leader of the Baptists, though he was formally elected to this position only in 1909.

[36] Savinsky, Part I, pp. 158-160.

[37] L.N. Mitrokhin, *Baptizm* [Baptists] (Moscow: IPL , 1966), p. 60.

[38] S.Sannikov (sostavitel), *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], Vyp.1/ (Odessa: Bogomyslie, 1996), p. 356.

in such a way that it allowed the Russian Baptist community to legalize its activities.[39] The same year (1879) the Tbilisi Baptist church organized the first Baptist Conference, which ECB consider to be the starting point from which they count their congresses.[40] Officially, however, the Russian Baptist Union dates from a conference of believers from the Caucasus and Southern Russia held in 1884 in Novo-Vasiliyevka (Tauria province).[41]

The life of Russian Baptists was never peaceful. Quite soon after the *Makovsky* circular of 1879, Orthodox authorities changed their policy and started a preventative campaign against the spread of evangelicalism among the Russian population.[42] Konstantin Pobedonostsev, the powerful chair of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church at that time, did everything possible to extirpate the spirit of the Baptist movement (to him a decidedly foreign movement) across the empire. A law about *Stundists* and Baptists of 3 September 1894 meant that all Russian-speaking non-Orthodox believers were outlawed.[43] During those years many leaders of the Baptist Union, including Pavlov himself, were imprisoned or exiled. Many of them lost their families, private property and social positions. Nevertheless, in spite of severe persecutions, the Baptist movement spread quite rapidly.[44] At the beginning of the twentieth century when the persecution diminished, the Baptist Union of Russia had united most of the various evangelical groups in the South of Russia. [45]

While the Russian Baptist Union played a central role in the development of evangelical spirituality in southern provinces of the country, there was another evangelical centre in the capital of the empire which had an influence on Russian Baptist developments. This had strong links with the aristocracy. Interest in non-traditional beliefs and mystical doctrines was a feature of the Russian aristocracy: Ivan the Terrible showed a great interest in

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[39] The main reason why the authorities in Tbilisi applied the *Makovsky* circular to Russians was that the Baptists in that region were of Molokan origin. So the Baptist community, they held, did not include converts from Orthodoxy.

[40] Strictly speaking this was not the first Baptist conference within the territory of the Russian Empire. Polish Baptists organized a conference in Łódź in 1878. See Krzysztof Bednarczyk, *Historia zborów Baptystów w Polsce do 1939 roku*, [History of Baptist congresses in Poland before 1939] (Warszawa: Slowo Prawdy, 1997), pp. 72-73. But the participants in that congress were not Russian-speaking.

[41] This information is included in general publications on Baptist history. E.g. A.W. Wardin, *Baptists around the world: a comprehensive handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), p.229.

[42] Savinsky, Part I, p. 217.

[43] Ibid.

[44] J.C. Pollock, *The faith of the Russian Evangelicals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 69-75.

[45] Savinsky, Part I, pp. 262-263.

Lutheranism,[46] and Nikolai II had a great affection for Rasputin.[47] Usually such interests never went beyond an elite circle, but this was different in the case of *Pashkovshina*, named after Vasiliy Alexandrovich Pashkov, one of the richest noblemen of Russia.

Lord Radstock, who was an English lay evangelist associated with the Open Brethren,[48] part of whose mission was to European aristocrats, visited Russia in 1874.[49] One of those converted in response to his preaching was Pashkov's wife, Alexandra Ivanovna. She invited the preacher to their house, and Vasiliy Pashkov accepted the new faith as well.[50] Other nobles who embraced the evangelical faith were Count Modest Korff and Count Alexis Bobrinsky, the chair of the Ministry of Transport.[51] The conversion of representatives of high society was of serious concern to Orthodox clergy and Radstock was forced to leave Russia.[52] But the evangelical group founded by him continued its activity. In 1876, Pashkov and others formed the Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Moral Reading,[53] a pioneering national evangelical mission. In 1884, Pashkov organised a congress in St. Petersburg attended by Baptists, Mennonites, and biblical Molokans.[54] This was part of a visionary attempt to make an inventory of all the evangelical resources in Russia. But the authorities could not tolerate such initiatives and the congress delegates were arrested. In the same year Pashkov and other influential members of the St. Petersburg group were expelled from

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[46] See the recent book by V. Solodovnikov, *Liuteranstvo: vozmozhnaia panatseia ot oprichniny* [Lutheranism: The possible remedy for o*prichnina?*], monograph (Moscow: 2006).

[47] E. Radzinskii, *Rasputin* (Moscow: AST Moscow, 2007).

[48] For Radstock see A. Trotter, *Lord Radstock: An Interpretation and a Record* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914).

[49] The best primary source for the Pashkovite movement is Princess Sophie Lieven's *Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie v Rossii* [Spiritual revival in Russia] (reprinted, Chicago,: Slavic Gospel Press, 1986). Other authors, such as J.A. Hebly, *Protestants in Russia* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1976), pp.62-72, use this book extensively in their accounts. For the most comprehensive account of the history of the Pashkovite movement see E. Heier, *Redstokizm i Pashkovizm* [Radstockism and Pashkovism] (Moscow: Ikar, 2002 [The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1970]).

[50] Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi*, [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian church], p. 90.

[51] Ibid., p.103.

[52] Savinsky, Part I, p. 150

[53] Ibid., p. 149,

[54] Ibid., p. 194-199.

Russia, and lived in exile till their death.[55] Ivan Kargel, who had been a member of the Tbilisi Baptist church and had then trained under Oncken in Hamburg and exercised ministry in German Baptist settings, became a leader of the St. Petersburg group.[56] In the early twentieth century, Ivan Prokhanov, a younger leader, used his Baptist connections and this evangelical community as a base for establishing his Union of Evangelical Christians.[57]

Although Pashkov never became a Baptist, the significance of his leadership for the development of Russian Baptists is indisputable. The Baptist Union was founded one month after the congress in St. Petersburg, a large sum of money being provided by Pashkov to enable the conference to take place.[58] Pashkov was intent on passing the baton of biblical Christianity to those who he believed could continue his mission. The Russian Baptist Union was the only serious organization of evangelicals to which Pashkov could look. But this did not mean that the St. Petersburg community of believers founded by Radstock and Pashkov had left the stage of Russian evangelical history. Meetings continued to take place, usually led by Ivan Kargel and often held in the home of Princess Natalie Lieven.[59] Kargel's teaching helped to shape the thinking of Russian evangelicalism, thinking that was to be inherited by the AUCECB. Because of the influence of Kargel, Prokhanov and the Evangelical Christians in the early twentieth century, some authors, such as Mitskevich and Szenderowski, do not even mention the Russian Baptist Union in their account of the history of the ECB and focus exclusively on Pashkov and his followers, seeing them as the major influence on later evangelical movements. [60] It is true that despite the reasonably long period when the Baptist

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[55] Mitskevich, pp. 106-107. After his exile Pashkov visited Russia only once, in 1884. He died in 1902 in Rome.

[56] See G. Nichols, 'Ivan Kargel and the pietistic community of late imperial Russia', in Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli, eds, *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives* (Prague: IBTS, 2007), pp. 71-87. For a comprehensive study of Kargel see G.L. Nichols, 'Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality' (Ph.D. thesis, International Baptist Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2010).

[57] This period was described in Lieven, *Dukhovnoe probuzhdenie v Rossii* [Spiritual revival in Russia], pp. 10-37.

[58] 'J.G. Kargel to Dear brother in the Lord [V.A. Pashkov], 3 May 1884', translated and printed in Lawrence Klippenstein, 'Russian Evangelicalism Revisited: Ivan Kargel and the Founding of the Russian Baptist Union', *Baptist History and Heritage*, vol. 27, no. 2 (April 1992), pp. 42-48.

[59] Princes Natalie Lieven was one of the friends of Pashkov. After his emigration she became a main sponsor of the St. Petersburg evangelical community and a personal supporter of I. Kargel in his mission and publications.

[60] Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi*, [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian

Union was the only evangelical organization in Russia, its impact on the history of the ECB post-WWII was limited. Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that the Russian Baptist Union led by Pavlov was a direct precursor of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

d. The journey from two Unions to one

1. Beginnings of the Union of Evangelical Christians

The name Evangelical Christians-Baptists implies that the AUCECB denomination has a double origin. As well as its indebtedness to the Russian Baptist Union, there was a link back to the Pashkovites and to Ivan Kargel, but especially a connection to the life and work of Ivan Stepanovich Prokhanov (1869-1935). During Pobedonostsev's time of severe persecution,[61] the goal of the Baptist Union was survival. Inevitably, these harsh circumstances affected the psychology of church members and leaders of the Union. It seems that the only achievement of Baptists during those years (which became their legacy for future generation) was the creation of a strict structure for their communities.[62] This structure to a certain extent reproduced the hierarchical and territorial episcopal system accepted in the Orthodox Church. Russian Baptist churches preserved a high level of discipline and were easily managed.[63] At the same time, such a structure made it quite complicated for strangers to enter a Baptist community. Against this background, Prokhanov had a crucial role in renewing the spirit of mission among Russian evangelicals.

Ivan Stepanovich Prokhanov was born into a Molokan family in Tbilisi and was baptized in the neighbouring church in Vladikavkaz.[64] His early evangelical links were primarily Baptist. In the late nineteenth century, while a student at the St. Petersburg

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church], mentions the Baptist Union in his description of evangelicals before Prokhanov. A.I. Mitskevich, in *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], ignores the existence of Pavlov's Union altogether. Authors who stress the significance of the Russian Baptist Union usually seek to prove the independence of Russian biblical Christianity from foreign influence. Savinsky is one of them.

[61] From 1882 to 1905 according to Savinsky, Part I, p. 170.

[62] This model characterized ECB churches after World War II. A thorough analysis of traditions of church structure among Russian evangelicals can be found in J. Dyck, 'Fresh skins for new wine: on the structure of the first Russian Baptists Congregations in South Russia', in Corrado and Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives*, pp. 34-51.

[63] All churches were grouped according to territorial principles. Every province had its sub-union headed by a superintendent, who had certain power and privileges. For example, they ordained local pastors. This system was accepted in 1911 during the Baptist Congress in Moscow.

[64] L. Shenderovskii, *Ivan Prokhanov* (Toronto: Evangelskaya Vera, 1986), p. 40.

Technological University, he attended meetings of the Kargel group and became an active lay missionary. After graduation and experience abroad,[65] which included studies at Bristol Baptist College,[66] Prokhanov returned to St. Petersburg in 1905 and founded a new congregation consisting mainly of people who joined him from Kargel's church.[67] The central idea of Prokhanov's community was to reach mainstream Russian society with the Gospel. From the beginning this community was independent from the Baptist Union though initially it did not compete with the traditional Baptist organization. At this point, with new freedoms as a result of the political changes in 1905, the leadership of the Russian Baptist Union was finding it hard to adapt to the new situation. D. Mazayev, the formal president of the Union, said in London in 1905 during the First World Congress of Baptists:[68] "Now I cannot say anything about the situation of Baptists in Russia because no one knows what this situation is like. I can only say that we do not have a present. We only have the past and we expect the future. And we pray that the expected would, indeed, be better."[69] This did not present an inspirational vision.

A year later, Prokhanov organized the Russian Evangelical Union.[70] He designed this Union as an interdenominational alliance of individuals for the global expansion of biblical

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[65] Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi*, [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian church], p.127.

[66] Bristol College was recommended to him by Friedrich Baedeker, who was an associate of Radstock, Pashkov and Kargel. See I.S. Prokhanoff, *In the Cauldron of Russia, 1869-1933* (New York: All Russian Evangelical Christian Union, 1933), p. 97.

[67] Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi*, [Evangelical Christians, the born-again evangelical movement in the historic Christian church], p.129.

[68] Richard V. Pierard, Elna Jean Young Bentley, and Gerald L. Borchert, eds., *Baptists Together in Christ, 1905-2005: A Hundred-Year History of the Baptist World Alliance* (Birmingham, AL: Samford University Press, 2005), p. 5.

[69] Ivanov V.V., Mazaev D.I., *World Congress of Bapitsts in London, 1905* [Vsemirnyi kongress baptistov v Londone v 1905 g.], Rostov-na-Donu: 1908, p. 5

[70] Savinsky, Part I, p. 283. From the perspective of Evangelical Christian authors like Prokhanov himself, Shenderovskii and Mitskevich, Evangelical Christians existed from the beginning of evangelicalism in Russia; therefore they do not see 1906 as a special year in the life of the evangelical movement. The periodical of the Evangelical Christians, *Khristianin*, started in 1906 though at that time it did not represent any formal organization. In the same year Prokhanov sent a proclamation to all evangelicals of Russia with a proposal to organize a union of evangelical individuals. This event can be considered the starting point of the movement of Evangelical Christians.

Christianity in Russia.[71] Although nominally Orthodox Christians had equal opportunity to enter the new Union, in practice the Union absorbed individual believers and whole communities that belonged to the Russian Baptist Union. By 1908, two years after the new Union had been formed, the first Regional Congress of Evangelical Christians took place in Odessa. By this time a considerable number of local Baptist communities had, in fact, changed their denominational allegiance and had broken with the Baptist Union.[72] In 1909 the Union of Evangelical Christians was officially proclaimed as an independent denomination. It united former Baptist churches and autonomous congregations of Evangelical Christians which had preserved this name since the 1890s, when groups of believers had used this description in the hope of avoiding the persecution directed towards Baptists.[73]

It is no surprise that many Russian Baptist leaders (though not all of them) were infuriated by the appearance of the new Union. The most irritating point for them was the informality of Prokhanov's organization. Its flexible nature and expansive vision – which included the hope of forming a Russian Evangelical Alliance which any individual Christian could join - challenged the solid structure and discipline accepted by the Baptists. One Baptist leader, A. Mazayev, wrote in 1908:

> It is incomprehensible! Any mind refuses to understand this terrible Union. How is it possible to be a member of a Baptist or an Orthodox church and, at the same time, to be a member of the Evangelical Union.[74]

Despite protests of this kind, many important evangelical leaders accepted Prokhanov's leadership in the national evangelical movement.[75] For example, Ivan Kargel, in spite of a certain irritation because of the provocative character of Prokhanov's activities,[76] finally fully supported him and began to promote the Union of Evangelical Christians, using all his considerable influence.[77]

Although initially the Evangelical Christians were numerically weaker than the Baptists, they had great growth potential because of their missionary spirit and their openness

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[71] Savinsky, Part I, p. 283.

[72] The First Congress of Evangelical Christians took place from 25.12.1908 to7.01.1909: Shenderovskii, *Ivan Prokhanov*, p. 94.

[73] *HECB*, p. 153

[74] A.M. Mazayev, *O 'svobode' v Sankt-Peterburge* [About 'freedom' in St. Petersburg], in *Baptist*, vol. 9 (1909), p. 11.

[75] For example, V. Fetler: see Mitskevich, pp. 136-137.

[76] Nichols, 'Ivan Kargel and the pietistic community of late imperial Russia', p. 86.

[77] Ibid.

to the world.[78] Over the course of a few years, notably in the period between the two Russian revolutions (1905 and 1917), the Union of Evangelical Christians outstripped the Russian Baptist Union in virtually all spheres. Thus, Prokhanov started to issue a mass magazine, *Khristianin* ("Christian"), with various associated publications such as *Bratsky Listok* ("Fraternal paper"), *Molodoi Vinogradnik* ("Young vineyard"), and *Detskiy Drug* ("Friend of children").[79] Some publications appeared even during the worst years of World War I.[80] In addition, Prokhanov published many books and pamphlets. The hymnals that were published during those years are still in use in a great many Russian-speaking congregations of the ECB and among Pentecostals. Prokhanov also pioneered aspects of educational activity among Russian evangelicals, setting up a theological school.[81] He actively worked on the final legalization of evangelical Christianity in the Russian Empire and some other juridical support for non-Orthodox believers.[82]

It is not the case that the Baptist Union was idle in this period. The leaders of the Union tried to engage in some of the activities that they observed in the Union of Evangelical Christians. But the evidence is that they were not particularly successful. Although the Baptist Union opened its youth department, supervised by V. Fetler (who was to become a powerful evangelical leader), in 1909,[83] this department was too formal. To take another example, their journal *Baptíst* was published less regularly over time, and with a decreasing number of copies. Indeed the publication of the journal almost brought the Union to financial disaster and despite the Union's best efforts the journal was finally closed in 1914.[84] The Baptist Union did not run its own theological school, as the Evangelical Christians did, but

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[78] See H.J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 169-179.

[79] *HECB*, pp. 165-166.

[80] The newspaper *Utrennyaya Zvezda* ('Morning Star') was published even after *Khristianin* was closed.

[81] He started the first study courses in the St. Petersburg church in 1905. In 1911 he received permission to have a full-scale theological school, but this existed for only one year.

[82] I.S. Prokhanov, *Zapiska o pravovom polozhenii evangel'skikh khristian, a takzhe baptistov i srodnykh im khristian v Rossii* [Note about the legal status of Evangelical Christians as well as Baptists and other Christians like those in Russia] (St. Petersburg, 1913).

[83] *Pervyi Vserossiiskii s"ezd kruzhkov baptistskoi molodezhi, iunoshei i devits, v Rostove na Donu, 1909 goda* [The first all-Russian congress of groups of Baptist youth, young men and women, in Rostov-on-Don, of 1909] (Rostov-on-Don: T-vo Pavlova I Slavgorodskago, 1909).

[84] Savinsky, Part I, p. 274.

sent several people to study in the seminary in Lódź (Poland).[85] But the Union failed to secure the financial support of its students.[86]

Starting with 1912, the position of both Unions in the society worsened.[87] All evangelicals in Russia were considered to be foreign agents and, amid the rise of a patriotic spirit in the period before and then at the beginning of the war, their contacts abroad left a negative mark on their image.[88] The situation was aggravated by the predominantly pacifist character of both Unions, which they had inherited from their Mennonite and Molokan ancestors.[89] In 1914-1917 many evangelical churches in both Unions were at the very edge of survival.[90]

2. The two Unions after 1917

The Revolution of February 1917 gave a boost to evangelical hopes in Russia. All prisoners of conscience were released from jails. Both the Baptist and Evangelical Christian Unions organized congresses. 1917 was a year of mass evangelization events and many new congregations of evangelicals emerged throughout the country.[91] In the autumn of that year the Moscow community of Evangelical Christians gained the building of the former Reformed Church, where later the headquarters of the AUCECB was set up.[92] Despite the new religious freedom, believers still felt uncertain of their position, however, since this freedom was not guaranteed by any law from the so-called 'Provisional Government'. That is why the Communist October Revolution, which at first granted real religious freedom and put an end to the religious domination of the Orthodox Church,[93] was greeted quite positively by virtually all sectarians. Much information from that time confirms that during the first decade after the Communist Revolution the new government was sufficiently tolerant for Evangelical Christians and Baptists.

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[85] Ibid. p.275.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid. p.311.

[88] K. Prokhorov, 'The "Golden Age" of the Soviet Baptists in the 1920s', in Corrado and Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives*, p. 95.

[89] Mitskevich, pp. 215-216

[90] Ibid., pp. 174-176.

[91] V.A. Popov, 'Semnadtsatyi god v sud'bakh otechestvennogo protestantizma' [1917 for domestic Protestantism], in *140 let Rossiiskomu baptizmu, Proshloe, nastoiashchee, perspektivy*, materialy konferentsii 18-19 oktybria 2007 g. (Moscow: RSEKhB, 2007), pp.189-196; esp. pp.190-191.

[92] Ibid.

[93] See M. Spinka, *The church in Soviet Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 3-51.

The extraordinary (for Russia) tolerance can be seen in the exemption of Baptists and Evangelical Christians from military service during the Civil War.[94] Authorities allowed and even encouraged the organization of Christian farms and industrial workshops.[95] The Evangelical Christians' network of collective farms was very attractive for people suffering starvation.[96] With an eye to a new generation, Prokhanov paid much attention to the development of a youth movement. It seems that after 1922 the Russian evangelicals were not allowed to have any formal centralized organization for their young members,[97] so the Baptist youth department ceased to function, but Prokhanov's network of independent youth groups was very successful. It was even considered as an alternative to the state supported Young Communist League (*Komsomol*), and had an informal title, *Bapsomol*.[98] There were testimonies that in some regions *Bapsomol* members outnumbered those of the official *Komsomol*.[99] Among members of the youth group of the Union of Evangelical Christians in

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[94] Later pacifism created complications for the relations between Christians and the authorities. The culmination of pacifistic rhetoric was reached in Ivan Prokhanov's proclamation to Baptists world-wide to sabotage any military activity (his so-called 'Voice from the East') in 1922. This proclamation made the Communist government angry. After a long campaign, in 1926 the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs – the police organization in the Soviet Union in Stalin's period) forced the evangelicals of both Unions to accept compulsory military service for their members. See B. Koppiters, 'Patsifistskie sekty, bol'sheviki i pravo na otkaz ot voinskoi sluzhby' [Pacifist sects, Bolsheviks and the right to refuse military service], in *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma* (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2001), pp. 390-430; esp. pp. 410-411.

[95] V.A. Popov, *I.S.Prokhanov, stranitsi zhizni* [I.S. Prokhanov, Pages of life] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 1996), p. 137.

[96] W. Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, c1961. ; London: Macmillan and Co., 1961), pp. 289-291.

[97] Ibid., p. 300.

[98] Kom-so-mol is an abbreviation or *Kommunisticheskii Soiuz Molodyozhi* (Communist Union of Youth). In Bap-so-mol the word 'Communist' was replaced with the word 'Baptist'. *Bapsomol* was not the official name of any Youth Christian Organization. Rather it was a nickname given to different youth groups in the 1920s.

[99] The communist propagandist I. Elishevich said in 1928 that the total number of Young Christian League members in the Soviet Union reached 1.5 million. In Melitopol 90% of young people belonged to *Bapsomol*. In Samara this number was 50%. Elishevich describes how the entire local organization of the Young Communist League in Elabug was converted to the Baptist faith. No doubt Ellishevich exaggerated the influence of *Bapsomol* in order to justify mass repressions of believers. But his book reflects the anxiety of the communist authorities because of the impressive achievements of evangelicals in their mission among young people. See I. Ia. Elishevich *Religiia v bor'be za rabochuiu molodezh'* [Religion in the struggle for working youth] (Leningrad: Tipografiia imeni N.Bukharina. Priboi, 1928), pp. 19-22.

Moscow was the father of Alexei Bichkov, who became the General Secretary of the AUCECB.[100] Another feature was that Evangelical Christians and Baptists published dozens of central and regional periodicals, as well as Bibles, hymnals and other religious literature. The number of evangelicals grew from approximately 200,000 in 1917 to an estimated 800,000 in 1928.[101]

Leaders of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists showed a real sympathy towards the Soviet state during the first years after the Revolution, a sympathy which they were prepared to declare outside the USSR. There was a very conspicuous episode during the Baptist World Congress in Stockholm in 1923 when the Russian delegation insisted that the flag of Soviet Russia be hung alongside the flags of the other countries with participants at the Congress.[102] At the Congress, P.V. Pavlov (son of Vasiliy Pavlov)[103] enthusiastically claimed: "The Federal Government is very eager to protect believers from religious constraints."[104] In 1927 the Baptist Union issued the "Declaration about installation and defence of the just social order",[105] in which it claimed that socialism is "the most perfect and just form of human co-existence"[106] and capitalism is "the beast from the abyss."[107] As part of the identification of evangelicals with the nation, I. Prokhanov organized humanitarian aid for victims of the famine in the USSR in 1921.[108]

In 1925 Prokhanov proposed a revolutionary programme for the renewal of people's life in the country.[109] The new project by Prokhanov presented a utopian plan of complete reformation in all spheres of social life. It did not differ too much from the classical Communist utopia. Prokhanov proposed a scheme to build the ideal society, as propagated by

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[100] A.M.Bichkov, *Moi zhiznennyi put'* [The way of my life] (Moscow: Otrazheniie, 2009), 5-6.

[101] Savinsky, Part II, p. 12.

[102] P.V. Pavlov, 'Otchet russkoi delegatsii na Vsemirnom Baptistskom S"ezde v Stokgol'me, 26 iiunia *1923 g.*' [Report of the Russian delegation at the World Baptist Congress in Stockholm on June, 26, 1923], *Baptist* , vol. 3(1925), pp. 5-8.

[103] Pavel Pavlov was a professional lawyer. During the revolutionary years he participated in mass evangelization with his father. He was arrested and died in the GULAG in 1936. See L. Kovalenko, *Oblako svidetelei khristovykh* [The cloud of Christ's witnesses] (Kiev: Tsenr Khristianskogo Sotrudnichestva, 2000), pp. 138-141.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Je.G. Filimonov, *Baptizm i Gumanizm* [Baptists and Humanism] (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), p.162.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Popov, *I.S.Prokhanov, stranitsi zhizni*, p.79.

[109] This idea was presented in the article *Novaia ili Evangel'skaia Zhizn'* [New or Evangelical life], *Khristianin*, vol. 1(1925), pp. 4-23.

the new authorities, but under the umbrella of evangelical Christianity. Although for many more conservative Russian evangelical Christians, who were not inclined to any '*modus vivendi* with the new regime',[110] Prokhanov's plan seemed extreme, his ideas were officially formulated as a Developmental Plan in the documents of the subsequent congresses of the Evangelical Christians.[111] This plan was published as a booklet under the title *Evangel'skii klitch* [Call of the Gospel].[112] But the possibility of such evangelical initiatives was not to continue. In 1929 Stalin launched his anti-religious campaign. Ironically, a year before that Pavel Ivanov-Klyshnikov, the representative of Russian Baptists at the BWA Congress in Toronto, Canada, had presented a positive view of Baptist life in the Soviet state to the international Baptist community.[113] In March 1929 the ruling *On religious associations* was passed. Religious work was drastically reduced and wave of persecution began.[114] Stalin's struggle against religion was part of a general strategy of conversion of the USSR into a totalitarian state with no freedom in any sphere of human life.[115]

3. The movement for unity between the two Unions

Although the existence of the Union of Evangelical Christians as an alternative to the Baptist Union might seem to have been simply a result of the personal ambitions of Prokhanov, this is not the case. The emergence of a second Union and the coexistence of the two Unions mirrored the social diversity within Russian evangelicalism. To an extent the Baptist Union embodied a conservative evangelical wing, guided by traditions of Russian Molokan-like sectarianism, while the Evangelical Christians included more progressive Christians who wanted to follow a more open spiritual pathway. This difference could even be observed in the hymns which were used during worship services. Prokhanov translated hundreds of

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[110] M. Dowling, 'Baptists in the Twentieth-Century Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union', in D.W. Bebbington, ed., *The Gospel in the world: international Baptist studies* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), p. 220.

[111] Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union*, pp. 291-293.

[112] G.S. Lialina, *Baptizm: illiuzii i real'nost'* [Baptists: illusions and reality] (Moscow: IPL, 1977), pp. 130-131.

[113] See M. Dowling, 'Baptists in the Twentieth-Century Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union', pp. 219-220.

[114] D. Pospelovsky, *Russian church under the soviet regime 1917-1982*, V.1 (Crestwood, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), pp.163-165.

[115] Ibid., pp.174-179.

English evangelical hymns into Russian.[116] The common practice in many Baptist congregations was to use old Molokan hymns.[117] At the same time, I would argue that the difference between Evangelical Christians and Baptists was not doctrinal. The greatest divergences between them were not about classical issues in theology, but were related to the celebration of communion and the ordination of pastors. Evangelical Christians practised an open Lord's Table and did not pay much attention to the ordaining of ministers in their congregations.[118]

The first voices in favour of merging the Evangelical Christian and Baptist streams could be heard in 1905, even before the Evangelical Christians had organized themselves officially.[119] Then the desire for unity was used by some as an argument for attracting evangelical communities into Prokhanov's Union.[120] But by the time of the February 1917 Revolution no significant attempts to merge, besides issuing proclamations, had been made. In April 1917, however, within a dramatically new context, the Union of Evangelical Christians sent its delegates to the Congress of Baptists. This Congress appointed a Merger Committee and in October 1917 Baptists sent their representatives to the Congress of Evangelical Christians. As a result of the consultations both Unions formed a Temporary Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists.[121] The following years saw a number of local communities, such as the two largest churches of Petrograd (previously St Petersburg), merging.[122]

The process of unification of that period reached its climax in 1920. During two consecutive congresses of Evangelical Christians and Baptists the leadership of both Unions expressed a strong willingness for a complete merger.[123] Nevertheless, it appeared that when

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[116] I.S. Prokhanov, *V kotle Rossii* [In the cauldron of Russia] (Chicago, Ill.: World Fellowship of Slavic Evangelical Christians, 1992), pp. 143-145.

[117] *HECB*, pp. 169-170.

[118] These doctrinal differences were explained by I. Prokhanov in his book *O vozlozhenii ruk i rukopolozhenii: Zapiska I. S. Prokhanova k 3-mu Vserossiiskomu S"ezdu Evangel'skikh Khristian* [About laying on of hands and ordaining: a note of I.S. Prokhanov to the 3rdAll-Russian Congress of Evangelical Christians] (St. Petersburg: T-vo "Raduga", 1911)

[119] Savinsky, Part I, p. 299.

[120] Ibid., p.300.

[121] *HECB*, p. 192.

[122] Ibid., p.194.

[123] 'Protokol Vserossiiskogo s"ezda evangel'skikh khristian - baptistov, sostoiavshegosia v g. Moskve s 27 maia po 6 iiunia 1920 g' [Minutes of the All-Russian Congress of Evangelical Christians–Baptists, Moscow, 27 May – 6 June, 1920)], *Slovo istiny*, vol. 1 (1920), pp. 21-30.

it came to moving from "willingness" to "practice" the unity that had been envisaged was a dream. As soon as the leaders started to ponder concrete steps in reconstructing their organizations they found that they were not ready to accept what would have been serious compromises.[124] Prokhanov was especially firm in his position. It seems that his version of merger consisted in Baptist churches merely dissolving into the Union of Evangelical Christians.[125] The Baptists, by contrast, showed interest in and flexibility about merging. After the failure of the reorganization in 1920 the leadership of the Evangelical Christians received further dialogue proposals from the Baptists, but these were rejected. The Baptist World Alliance made attempts at the Stockholm Congress in 1923 to encourage Prokhanov to work together with his Baptist colleagues, since both Unions were members of the BWA, but the BWA efforts failed.[126] After 1923 the idea of merger was put to one side, and the relations between the Unions remained quite strained. Sometimes it seemed that the two Unions were at war with each other.[127]

4. Decline of the Unions during the period of persecutions

In the middle years of the 1920s both Unions intensified their missionary efforts, which led to a significant growth in local church membership numbers.[128] It was the last revival in the pre-war history of the USSR and it ended with the severe persecutions which devastated evangelicals as never before. In 1928 two delegations from Russian Baptists and Evangelical Christians[129] went to Toronto to the Fourth Congress of the Baptist World Alliance. During this visit Prokhanov left the Alliance, it seems because of his ambitions to found a worldwide organization of Evangelical Christians.[130] But what was really important for Evangelical Christians in Russia was his decision to stay in the West. This act shocked Prokhanov's

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[124] Savinsky, Part II, p. 40.

[125] Ibid.

[126] A special meeting for representatives of the two Russian unions was organized by the BWA leadership during the Stockholm Congress in 1923: P.V. Pavlov, 'Doklad ot imeni russkoi delegatsii na Vsemirnom konglesse baptistov v Stokgol'me' [Report of the Russian delegation at the World Baptist Congress in Stockholm on June, 26, 1923], *Baptist*, vol. 3 (1925), pp. 5-8.

[127] For example, leaders of the Baptist Union stated that Prokhanov and other leaders of the Evangelical Christians were not allowed to enter Baptist congregational meetings: Mitskevich, *Istoriia Evangel'skikh Khristian-Baptistov* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], pp. 240-241.

[128] Growth was stimulated by missionary programmes accepted at Congresses of both the Evangelical Christians and the Baptists held in 1926.

[129] Most delegates were from different regional departments of the Baptist Union. Prokhanov was the only representative from the Evangelical Christians. Savinsky, Part II, p. 104.

[130] Ibid., p.105.

colleagues and paralyzed the work of his Union but, to some extent, it also saved it. Stalin's regime did not find an obvious target among Evangelical Christians, who now lacked a leader, and so the strongest blows were directed against Baptist leaders. In the years following 1928 virtually all leaders of the Baptist Union, as well as many Evangelical Christian missionaries were arrested, and many were executed.[131] In 1929, the Baptist Union stopped all its activities because of the mass arrests of its leaders as well as lack of finances. In 1930, it was restored for a while, seemingly because of a general softening of the repressions before the global purge inside the Communist Party.[132] But soon Nikolai Odintsov, a former president of the Union, was arrested and executed.[133] Ilya Goliaev, elected instead of him, fled from Moscow to an unknown place and was found in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) after World War II, a few months before his death.[134] In 1935, the remaining senior officers of the Baptist Union were arrested and killed, and the Union's organizational activities ceased.[135] This situation lasted until the German invasion in 1941.[136]

The Union of Evangelical Christians, which was very sensitive to the social background, succeeded in surviving during the first phase of the anti-religious campaign. It slowly recuperated after the loss of its charismatic leader. In 1931, Evangelical Christians organized a conference which elected a new board of leaders and accepted a new charter which was in accordance with the new severe law on religion.[137] The headquarters of the Evangelical Christians was moved from Leningrad to Moscow. Yakov Zhidkov became the new president of the Union and three existing leaders, Alexander Karev, Andrey Andreyev and Mikhail Orlov, remained its officers. But Zhidkov and Karev were arrested,[138] so only Andreyev and Orlov did not end up in prison. After the arrest of Zhidkov, Orlov played the role of the Union's interim president.[139] But actually the Union of Evangelical Christians

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[131] For details as they were later conveyed to an English-speaking readership, see J.C. Pollock, *The faith of the Russian Evangelicals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 82-88.

[132] The first wave of repressions by Stalin was directed to those who did not belong to the Communist Party. In the second wave of repressions the focus was shifted to purges of members of the Party. See L.L.S. Braun, *Religion in Russia, from Lenin to Khrushchev: an uncensored account* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1959), pp. 33-37.

[133] Savinsky, Part II, p. 133.

[134] Ibid., pp. 133, 146-147.

[135] Ibid., pp.136-137.

[136] Walters, *World Christianity. Eastern Europe*, pp. 30-31.

[137] Sawatsky, p. 47.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

was as incapable of functioning in the second half of the 1930s years as was the Baptist Union. Local churches were mostly concerned about survival amid fierce hostility. The history of the ECB of that period is to a large extent a history of martyrdom.[140] This situation lasted until the shock of the war caused the authorities to revise their attitude to religion.

World War II brought a certain relief to religious communities in the USSR. Both Baptists and Evangelical Christians opened new underground churches.[141] Several evangelical leaders were released from prison at the beginning of the war. Y. Zhidkov and A. Karev were moved to Moscow by their respective organizations with instructions to be ready to work in a new Union.[142] In 1942 "A Letter - A Proclamation to all Baptists and Evangelical Christians in the USSR" was circulated to local congregations.[143] This Letter, calling believers to fight fascists, was signed by representatives of the former Baptist Union, such as M. Golyayev, P. Malinin and N. Levindanto, and members of the Evangelical Christian Union, A. Karev, Y. Zhidkov, M. Orlov, A. Andreyev and others.[144] Savinsky claims that the Letter was initially written by four persons, namely, two Baptists, Levindanto and Golyayev, and two Evangelical Christians, Orlov and Andreyev, who met around that time. Levindanto asked leaders of the Evangelical Christian Union to let Baptists join their alliance and the other side agreed.[145] To make their statement more authoritative they approached the former leaders of both Unions who had recently came back from exile and prison. Thus they formed the Temporary Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists,[146] which in the autumn of 1944 was transformed into the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists.[147]

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[140] Examples of martyrdoms can be found in a number of works devoted to that period. E.g. the book by A.I. Savin, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i evangel'skie cerkvi Sibiri v 1920-1940 gg.: Dokumenty i materially* [The Soviet state and evangelical churches of Siberia in 1920-1940] (Novosibirsk: "Posoh", 2004), gives a thorough picture of what was happening to evangelical believers during the period of repressions. One of the best books that describes the anti-religious compaign of the Soviet government is Paul Froese's *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (California: University of California Press, 2008), see pp.40-70.

[141] *HECB*, pp. 228-229.

[142] Savinsky, Part II, pp. 146-147.

[143] *Pis'mo-vozzvanie ko vsem baptistam i evangel'skim "ristianam v SSSR, mai 1942 goda* [The Letter - A Proclamation to all Baptists and Evangelical Christians in the USSR, May 1942](Archive of the RUECB).

[144] Ibid.

[145] Savinsky, Part II, p. 153.

[146] Ibid., p.154.

[147] Ibid., pp.155-156.

5. The formation of the AUCECB

In 1943, a year before the formation of the AUCECB, the Soviet government revised its attitude to religious institutions.[148] It allowed several traditional confessions to resume their activities under the control of the "Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults" (CARC).[149] Leopold Braun called this process "Religious revival aimed by Beria's secret police".[150] Only two traditional denominations/movements were really influential among the Slavic population: the Orthodox Church, and non-Orthodox Christian sects which traditionally were associated with Baptists.[151] So the creation of a "Baptist" organization under state patronage was among the priorities in the campaign for the restoration of traditional religions in the USSR. The All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christians and Baptists took place in October 1944.[152] Forty-five delegates, mostly pastoral leaders or officers of the former Unions, participated. It is very clear that Soviet authorities initiated the Congress and that most of its decisions were promoted by governmental instructions,[153] even though no documents have been found that provide evidence of the precise relationship between the AUCECB and CARC or the KGB during that period.[154] Indeed *BV* is the main source of information on the Congress and its decisions.[155]

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[148] The most thorough study of the shift in religious policy by Stalin during World War II can be found in V. Alekseiev, *Illiuzii i dogmy* [Illusions and dogmas] (Moscow: IPL,1991). According to him the revision in the state relations with religious organizations were associated with the beginning of acquisition of new territories by Soviet troops. Stalin wanted to be sure that religious leaders were his allies in this process. Also improving relations with religion helped him in his diplomatic efforts. The same idea is supported by Chumachenko in her book translated into English: T.A. Chumachenko, *Church and state in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev years* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

[149] Sawatsky, p. 59.

[150] Braun, *Religion in Russia, from Lenin to Khrushchev: an uncensored account*, p.59

[151] Denominations such as Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, or even Jehovah Witnesses, were considered in the popular mind as branches of the Baptist movement.

[152] Sawatsky, p. 84. It was in 1946 that the name of the Union became the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.

[153] For example, Sawatsky (ibid., p.78) notes that 'congress delegates had traveled to Moscow in military transports, hotel accommodation and food was provided by the state'.

[154] Sometimes the authorities gave the impression that an individual had collaborated with them in order to compromise this person. For example, Orlov (who later became a president of the AUCECB) was arrested and then released several days later. The implication was that he had cooperated with the government, but there is no evidence that this was the case.

[155] The materials of the Congress were published in the first issue of *BV* and further information was added by participants in the Congress in subsequent publications.

According to materials published in the first issue of *BV*, the unity of the two denominations was the only task of the Congress. Participants approved a resolution that claimed: "Having left behind all differences in opinions in the past, we decide to create from two Unions one: the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists under the authority of the All-Union Council which will reside in Moscow city."[156] The Congress also discussed and approved the Statutes of the new Council, [157] resolving issues of differences between the two denominations, providing rules whereby delegates to the Council were to be elected, and determining the distribution of responsibilities between its legislative and executive arms.[158] Key positions were obtained by Y. Zhidkov (president), A. Karev (secretary), M. Golyayev and M. Orlov (vice-presidents), P. Malin (treasurer), A. Andreyev, F. Patkovsky and N. Levindanto (members).[159] Although chairs in the executive board were distributed in equal proportions between Baptists and Evangelical Christians, the most important positions were granted to those who had Evangelical Christian origins. This was quite understandable because it was Baptists who joined the Union of Evangelical Christians. A. Karev became responsible for publishing *BV* and he held this role till his death in 1972.

e. Rise of the publications of the AUCECB: Traditions and Tendencies

Before attempting a close analysis of the contents of AUCECB publications, it is necessary to look at the role which they played and the traditions which were continued in them. This has to be set in a wider historical-literary context. Russian culture has always been basically oral.[160] A Russian literary language hardly existed before the famous poet Alexander Pushkin took up his pen during the first half of the nineteenth century.[161] Before that, the written

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[156] 'Polozhenie o Soiuze evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov' [Statement on the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists], *BV*, vol. 1 (1944), p. 33.

[157] Subsequently, these were changed, in 1948, 1960, 1963. The statutes of 1963 became the final version for the AUCECB, though they were revised slightly during the congresses of 1966 and 1974: Mitskevich, pp. 360-361, 386-389.

[158] There are English translations of versions of the Constitution in N.A. Levindanto (S.J. Wallace, trans.), 'Examination and Ratification of the Statute of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists', *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. 21 (1965), pp. 37-42. Differences between the Unions concerning the forms of certain rites, such as communion, baptism, or weddings, had been resolved during previous dialogues between Baptists and Evangelical Christians.

[159] *BV*, vol. 1 (1944), pp. 34-35.

[160] V.V. Vinogradov, *Izbrannye trudy. Istoriia russkogo literaturnogo iazyka* [Selected works. History of Russian literary language] (Moscow: Vysshaia shkola, 1978), pp. 40-64.

[161] N.V. Riasanovsky *History of Russia* (Oxford; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 392-396.

language differed from the colloquial to such an extent that ordinary people could not understand the written version.[162] This was especially relevant to the work and witness of Russian sectarians who were mostly illiterate people from the lower social orders. Illiteracy was one of the reasons why *Dukhobory* and *Khlisty* did not use the Bible in building their spirituality. Also, they did not have direct access to the biblical text. Because of this they developed their own bodies of narrative collections, like *Zhivotnaya Kniga* ("Book of Life"), recorded by Bonch-Bruevich,[163] in which biblical stories were mixed with popular legends.

For ordinary people, all published religious materials in Russian were associated with the sacred books of the Orthodox Church, such as its written liturgies (*Molitvoslov*) and *Chet'i Minei* (vitae sanctorum).[164] Accordingly the attitude to any printed text or even manuscript was very respectful. Religious texts were intrinsically sacred. Although the development of a national press and secular literature came to challenge the sacred element,[165] people preserved a special reverence for printed materials, which were extremely valued and trusted. In the nineteenth century a writer could be considered a kind of prophet. One can list a number of novels, such as "Fathers and Sons" by I. Turgenyev,[166] or "What is to be done?", by N.Chernishevsky,[167] that gave birth to new social movements.[168] Later, in Soviet times, the poet E. Evtushenko described the role of writing for Russians with his

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[162] Before Pushkin, language was divided into the high style, which reminded people of the Old Slavonic used in Orthodox liturgy, and the low style, which must not be used in writing (Ibid.).

[163] *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola Vyp. 2: Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev* [Materials on history and studies of Russian sectarianism and dissent, part 2: The book of life by Dukhoborys] (St Petersburg, 1909).

[164] Sets of biographies of saints: in old Russian 'Monthly reading' (because it was recommended to read parts of those books according to a certain schedule). There were many books under the same title. The first known version of *Chet'i Minei* belonged to Makarii. One of the most popular works of this kind in the nineteenth century was the book by Dmitry, *Mitropolite of Rostov*. Also there was 'Grand Chet'i Minei', which included stories from all other compilations of that sort. See *Polnyi pravoslavnyi bogoslovskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'. V" dvukh" tomakh"* [Full Orthodox Theological dictionary in two volumes] (Moscow: Izd-vo P. P. Soikina, 1913, vol. 2), p.1568.

[165] N.V. Riasanovsky *History of Russia* (Oxford; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 266.

[166] I. Turgenev, *Ottsy i deti* [Fathers and sons] (Biblioteka vsemirnoi literatury. Second series. V. 117. (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971).

[167] N.G. Chernyshevskii, *Chto delat'?* [What is to be done?] (Leningrad: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1935).

[168] J.N. Westwood, *Endurance and Endeavour: Russian History 1812-1992* (Oxford; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp.103-104.

famous saying: "A poet in Russia is more than just a poet."[169] The authorities in the Empire and then in the USSR understood the power of the printed word very well and did their best to control the printing process. *Samizdat* – underground dissident literature - appeared in the Russian Empire long before the Communist revolution.

1. Publications of evangelicals in early periods

In the religious sphere the distribution of printed materials had an even greater effect than anywhere else. Thus, as mentioned previously, copies of a Russian translation of the Holy Scriptures had the potential to give birth to new brands of biblical Christianity. Understanding the threat of the Russian Bible to traditional religion, the Orthodox clergy banned it. For a number of years the Bible was published in *Samizdat*[170] until the Orthodox Church was forced to issue its own version of the Russian Bible (the so called Synod Version).[171]

Early evangelicals could not ignore the specific attitude of Russians to books. Sergei Zhuk noticed:

> The main concern of peasants' dissenters was their illiteracy. Therefore they supported existing primary schools and established their own schools… Their schools were the first … to be founded by the peasants themselves.[172]

Distributors of Bibles and religious tracts were the evangelicals' first official missionaries; they even had a special name, *knigonoshy* ("colporteurs" or literally "book bearers").[173] The main foreign agency was the British and Foreign Bible Society, with a Russian Bible Society

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[169] Quotation from E. Evtushenko, *Bratskaia GES. Stikhi i poema* [Hydraulic Electric Power Station in Bratsk] (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1967), p.23.

[170] To translate Scripture became, in the nineteenth century, a form of expressing one's personal worldview. Among those who produced their own versions of the Bible were Leo Tolstoy and Zhukovsky, a famous poet and teacher of Pushkin: see *Novyi Zavet Gospoda Nashego Iisusa Khrista* [The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ], in (tr.) V.A. Zhukovskii (Berlin: 1885). Even Pobedonostsev, the main adversary of the very idea of new translations, finally wrote his own alternative 'conservative' version of the New Testament: *Novyi Zavet v perevode K. P. Pobedonostseva* [The New Testament translated by Pobedonostsev] (St. Petersburg.: Sinodal'naia tipografiia, 1907).

[171] The translation of the Bible into Russian was initiated by Metropolitan Filaret in 1845. The decision was made by the Synod and confirmed by Emperor Alexander II in 1857. The translation was completed by 1876. A full account of this can be found in the book by I.A.Chistovich, *Istoriia perevoda Biblii na russkii iazyk* [History of translating the Bible into the Russian language] (Moscow: RBO, 1997).

[172] Zhuk, *Russia's lost reformation: peasants, millennialism, and radical sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830-1917*, p.223.

[173] *HECB*, pp. 46-47.

being organized.[174] The Society for the Distribution of Holy Scriptures was founded in1869 and supported the *Knigonoshy*. Later support came from the St. Petersburg evangelicals, especially Korff.[175]

In 1875, the St. Petersburg community of Evangelical Christians started issuing the first evangelical magazine in Russian *Russkiy Rabochiy* ("Russian Worker"), the editors and sponsors of which were Maria and Anna Peiker.[176] This magazine was arranged as a literary almanac and did not carry any news items, sermons or discussions. It consisted solely of short stories with moral content in easy language designed for poorly-educated people. Pashkov's Society for the Encouragement of Spiritual and Moral Reading expanded the range of printed materials. The Society published hundreds of items, including works of John Bunyan, sets of the great Victorian preacher C.H. Spurgeon's sermons, various hymnals and easy reading Christian books.[177] The initial period of evangelical publishing lasted till the beginning of Pobedonostsev's reaction in 1884-1885.

In 1889, I. Prokhanov started his career as a wider evangelical leader by publishing an underground periodical called *Beseda* ("Talk").[178] Prokhanov was then in Baptist circles and D. Mazayev provided the finances for its production.[179] This journal was the first fully-fledged periodical of the Russian Baptists. It had several sections, including "Edifications", "Narratives", "Letters", "Notes", and "Poetry" The journal carried devotional materials and also a number of news items about Bible believers in Russia. In 1895 the police discovered the leading role of Prokhanov in the publication of the periodical and it was because of this that he had to leave Russia.[180] But the journal was sustained for a long time without him. *Beseda* became a model for virtually all later periodicals of Evangelical Christians and Baptists. Its different features were reproduced in many other evangelical journals, including *BV*. *Beseda* also created a tradition of replacing the real names of authors with pseudonyms

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[174] See J.C. Zacek, 'The Russian Bible Society and the Russian Orthodox Church', *Church History*, Vol. 35 (1966), pp. 411-437.

[175] N.A. Astafyev, *Obshestvo resprostraneniia Sv'ashennogo Pisaniia (1963-1893)* [The Society for the Distribution of Holy Scriptures (1863-1893)] (St. Petersburg, 1893) .

[176] S. Corrado, *Filosofiia sluzheniia polkovnika Pashkova* [The philosophy of ministry of Colonel Pashkov] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia Dlia Vsekh, 2005), pp.130-133.

[177] S. Corrado, 'The Gospel in society: Pashkovite social outreach in late imperial Russia', in Carrado and Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives*, pp. 52-70; esp. pp. 66-68.

[178] Prokhanov, *V kotle Rossii*, p.69.

[179] *HECB*, p. 121.

[180] Shenderovskii, *Evangel'skie khristiane (vozrozhdennoe evangel'skoe dvizhenie v istoricheskoi khrstianskoi tserkvi)*, p.127.

and acronyms. At first this was because it was wise to remain unknown, but later it was considered an expression of the authors' modesty and desire to give all glory to God.[181] When he returned to Russia, Prokhanov started the journal *Khristianin.*

BV had two direct predecessors: *Khristianin* and also the journal *Baptist.* These periodicals were published more or less regularly from the First Russian Revolution in 1905 to the devastation of the evangelical movement at the end of the 1920s.[182] They were very similar in their content, structure and even appearance, especially in the pre-revolutionary period. *Khristianin* was more stable in that it appeared more regularly, had just one editorial location, in St. Petersburg-Leningrad, and was supervised by only one person, Prokhanov. It managed to keep up regular communication with readers even when it could not be published in its full form.[183] The heart of both periodicals was a set of sermons, and another important feature was the inclusion of poems and music concluding with a selection of news items. *Khristianin* was clearly positioned as devotional reading. Although it also included small announcements and reports there was a special Evangelical Christian periodical designed specifically for these purposes: *Bratsky Listok*. This provided the first part of the title for *Bratsky Vestnik.*The journal *Baptist* in many aspects was constructed using the model of *Khristianin.* Its content was, however, more diverse since it was virtually the only mass media publication that the Baptist Union possessed before the formation of the AUCECB.[184]

Alongside the central periodical of each Union, there were a number of smaller journals and newspapers with modest circulation often connected with the personal missions of individuals or missionary groups. For example, V. Fetler's pre-revolutionary movement for the revival of believers was associated with the magazine *Gost'* ("Guest").[185] The Baptist missionary N. Timoshenko published the journal *Svet Istiny* ("Light of Truth") in Odessa until his arrest in 1914.[186] The full list of all known periodicals by Russian evangelicals is found in the 1965 jubilee article "Our Evangelical Journals", by V.Kusnetsov,[187] and carries twenty items, including *BV*. Probably the number was in reality even higher.[188]

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[181] Savinsky, Part I, p. 207.

[182] The information provided here is based on my analysis of the content of those periodicals.

[183] For example, during the war the newspaper *Utrennyaya Zvezda* was published instead of the journal.

[184] Before the October 1917 Revolution, the Baptists also had a youth magazine *Drug Molodezhi* ("Friend of Youth"). But it was a private periodical with a limited number of copies which was published locally in the town of Balashov in Saratov oblast (province).

[185] Savinsky, Part I, p. 275.

[186] Ibid., p.311.

[187] G.A. Kuznetsov, 'Nashi evangel'skie zhurnaly' [Our Evangelical Journals], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 65.

Kuznetsov summarised the tradition of evangelical periodicals in six points as follows:

1. Proclamation of Christ;
2. Emotional appeal: a strong plea to the feelings;
3. Focus on a devotional interpretation of the Bible;
4. Call to holiness;
5. Interest in biographies of saintly individuals;
6. Involvement in dialogue with readers.[189]

As will be seen, these six points are readily observed in *BV*.

2. The beginning of the publication of *Bratsky Vestnik*

BV inherited certain major features from *Khristianin*, but also from *Baptist*. The people responsible for it (such as Karev and Zhidkov) had previously held jobs in *Khristianin* so it was no surprise that in many aspects *BV* reproduced this periodical. At the same time, the editorial board had to follow the universality of *Baptist* since there were no alternatives/supplements to BV as there had been to *Khristianin*. So both traditions were informing *BV* in almost equal proportions. But while acknowledging the continuity between *BV* and the preceding periodicals, it is important to note a basic difference between them. In previous periods publishing was considered more of an auxiliary activity for evangelicals. Missionary endeavours had absolute primacy. Moreover believers had other concerns, such as social projects, Sunday schools, youth organizations, and education. At the time when the AUCECB was being formed and was developing most of these activities were impossible. Publishing was virtually the only task the Union could do for its churches, except administrative supervision. So the significance of *BV* was greater and more universal than all other periodicals in previous years. This is why its study is crucial in providing an understanding of many aspects of ECB life in the Soviet Union.

It is noteworthy that no decision on the publication of a new journal was mentioned during the 1944 Congress. It is quite clear that the Congress did not have the right to start a new form of mass media. This was the prerogative of the state. The "History of Evangelical Christians–Baptists in the USSR" hints that a concrete decision about the new periodical was made shortly after the Congress.[190] At the same time, the production of periodicals that would

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[188] He does not mention the journals that were not connected directly with the official unions (for example *Sektantskii vestnik*) or regional periodicals (like *Maiak* published in Poland).

[189] *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), pp. 69-70.

[190] "*Soon after* (my italics) creating the AUCECB the fraternity of Evangelical Christians–Baptists received the possibility to have its journal." (*HECB*, p. 238).

influence local believers was seemingly a significant part of the governmental agenda to create a network of "tame" religions. Within a few weeks of the Congress the AUCECB "received permission"[191] to issue *BV*.

The editorial board opened the first issue with an introductory article that contained a publishing programme which lasted for virtually all of *BV*'s lifetime.

It announced the topics and materials that were supposed to appear:

1. Religious patriotic articles: Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the motherland;
2. Sermons and devotional articles;
3. History of the evangelical Baptist movement in the USSR;
4. History of Christianity;
5. Biographies and obituaries of Evangelical Christians and Baptists;
6. Reports on the life and activities of the AUCECB;
7. Reports from local communities;
8. Received correspondence.[192]

Another announcement concerned the frequency of publication. It was planned to have six issues per year,[193] and the editors tried to follow this schedule. The regularity was often broken in the 1950s, probably because of impediments from the side of the CARC which needed to approve the publication of every issue. After 1963 there were no breaks in the announced frequency.[194]

Unfortunately, there is no clear explanation given of the origin of the title *Bratsky Vestnik* (Fraternal Messenger). The first part of the title, I have suggested, came from *Bratsky Listo*k. Also N. Levindanto in his speech at the 1944 Congress mentioned the periodical *Bratsky Soyuz* (Fraternal Union) from the period of the unsuccessful attempts of merger of the two strands of the evangelical movement in the 1920s.[195] The second part of the title reveals a clear affinity to an important word in evangelical vocabulary, "*blagovestnik*" (Good News messenger). This could also be considered as alluding to a Baptist journal with the same title that was, for a while, published in Siberia in the1920s.[196] The suggestion that

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[191] *HECB*, p. 238.

[192] 'Ot redakcii' [Editorial], *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 3.

[193] Ibid.

[194] In 1980, the first two issues were published together (which had never been done before at the beginning of a year), seemingly because of delays with preparatory work for publishing the materials of the 42nd Congress.

[195] *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 30.

[196] Kuznetsov 'Nashi evangel'skie zhurnaly' [Our Evangelical Journals, p. 70.

editors deliberately included such an allusion is quite possible because of the desire to maintain a balance between Baptist and Evangelical Christian features in the newborn Union.

On the other hand, the similarity of the title *Bratsky Vestnik* to the idiom *blagovestnik* proposed a certain missionary agenda for the periodical, though in quite a paradoxical manner. In the *BV* article "Some words on AUCECB activity" at the beginning of 1946, Zhidkov explained the role of *BV* as creating a place for public correspondence between the AUCECB and local believers.[197] It was a "messenger" because its purpose was to send circular messages to direct local churches. So the programme of *BV* consisted not in promoting any missionary activity towards people outside of the Union's communities but in replacing such activity with equipping believers already inside the churches. This was expressed very clearly, later, in the famous Instructive letter that split the Union in 1960: "The main goal of our ministry …is not an engagement of unbelievers but the satisfying of the daily spiritual needs of believers".[198]

It should be understood that such a position was not completely new for Russian evangelicals. Even during the pre-evangelical stage of Russian sectarianism a tendency to remain within their own communities can be clearly observed in virtually all sects. This was noted by Klibanov.[199] But for ECB it became the approach which allowed the AUCECB leadership to avoid confrontation with the regime while staying inside the framework of evangelical tradition. So the *BV* editorial board developed an internal spiritual mission to believers on the pages of the periodical. This mission had multiple facets which will be explored in later chapters of this thesis.

f. Conclusion

The Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the Soviet Union, who formally came together in 1944 with the founding of the AUCECB, were successors of a long tradition of Russian sectarianism. They were influenced by various groups of Russian Spiritual Christians, especially Molokans, and also by British evangelicals and German Baptists. Formally, the history of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists began with the appearance of the Russian Baptist Union in the 1880s, which can be considered as a direct ancestor of the AUCECB. This Union became an organization which consolidated the oldest Baptist churches organized

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[197] Y.Zhidkov, 'Neskol'ko slov o rabote VSEKhB' [Some words on AUCECB activity], *BV*, vol. 1 (1946), p.32.

[198] *Instruktivnoe pis'mo starshim presviteram VSEKhB* [Letter of instruction to superintendents of the AUCECB] (Archive of the RUECB) (point 3).

[199] Klibanov, *Istoriia religioznogo sektantstva v Rossii (60-e gody XIX v. - 1917 g.)*, p. 56.

in the second half of the nineteenth century in the Caucasus, Southern Ukraine, and St. Petersburg. The formation of the Baptist Union was affected by severe state persecution in the later years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

Persecution hindered the development of the Union and also contributed to the formation of a special attitude of opposition toward the mainstream society amongst the Russian evangelicals. In 1905 Russians received religious freedom, but Baptists were far from ready for a broader mission. In such circumstances, the younger Baptist and evangelical leader, Ivan Prokhanov, organized an alternative Union of Evangelical Christians, which was more open to society and soon began to compete with the traditional Union of Baptists. All the subsequent years before Stalin's Great Purge were years of coexistence and also of rivalry between the two Russian Unions. Although both Baptists and Evangelical Christians cherished the idea of building a joint body, they failed to reach that unity.

The Union of Evangelical Christians had great importance for the future of the AUCECB as a denomination. Being a progressive part of the Russian evangelical movement, it developed new forms of Christian thinking and practice and it provided the AUCECB with its top leaders. After a short period of relative stability and even prosperity in the first years after the Communist Revolution in Russia, Evangelical Christian and Baptist organizations were almost completely destroyed during the period of the state anti-religious campaign in 1929-1941. In those years the Baptist Union disappeared completely while the Union of Evangelical Christians existed only nominally. The restoration of Russian evangelicalism took place at the end of World War II as a result of a new state policy toward religious organizations. Using officers of the former Unions, whom they wanted under their control, the authorities forced believers to create a joint union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists. Thus, the All-Union Council of ECB came to life. The new Union took a great deal from its precursors but it had to exist in the environment of total state control which made it look for those elements in its legacy that would fit these new circumstances. Among the things allowed by the state was issuing a periodical. In the light of this, publishing activities became one of the most important functions of the AUCECB. The new journal received the title *Bratsky Vestink*. In part it followed the traditions of publications issued by the unions of Baptists and Evangelical Christians. Nevertheless, in the new situation the editorial board had to seek out new paths in order to guarantee its activity. These paths, which expressed the AUCECB's identity, will be examined in detail in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3
Publications by the AUCECB

a. Introduction

A systematic account of what was published in *BV* and other AUCECB publications requires an understanding of the specific historical developments in the publishing that was undertaken in the period. The previous chapter was concerned with an analysis of the developments that contributed to the emergence of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in Russia, which in turn led to the establishment of the AUCECB. But the historical mapping needs to be more specifically focussed on publications. In the case of *BV* the chronology is straightforward. *BV* had only two chief editors: Alexander Karev, from 1944 to 1971, and Vitaly Kulikov, from 1972 to 1993. Thus the periodical's history naturally falls into the two periods of their respective editorships. In this chapter I will look at these periods and the sub-periods within them and will seek to weave together an analysis of the AUCECB's work and its achievements in the area of publishing, since these are intimately connected, and within that will undertake an examination of the way in which *BV* played its part in these developments.

b. Periodisation of the history of the publishing activities of the ECB

Period I: 1944-1971

The first period started with the institution of the All-Union Council of the ECB and the publication of the first issues of the journal and ended with the death of its chief editor and, by then, the General Secretary of the AUCECB, A. Karev. The initial phase of this period, 1944 to 1949, lasted only four years and was interrupted by severe persecution which came at the end of Stalin's rule.[200] This persecution caused the cessation of all the publishing activities of the AUCECB in 1949. Publication of *BV* was resumed in 1953 after Stalin's death. The early 1950s were grim, but overall the phase that followed, 1953-1960, was probably the hardest time for Russian evangelicals since the total oppression of believers before World War II. This was because of Khrushchev's endeavours to extirpate religion in the USSR. One of the most important events of that time was the dissent within the ECB in the early 1960s. Yet in the initial years the publications produced by the AUCECB were significant. Through *BV* in particular, the ECB achieved some success in constructing its

[200] The beginning of the Cold War seems to have been the main reason for this wave of persecution (Savinsky, Part II, p. 194).

identity and developing its work in the area of spiritual formation, as well as in strengthening its position in Soviet society. This enabled the AUCECB to survive the dark years, division and stagnation.

Period II: 1972-1993

During this period Alexei Bichkov was leader of the AUCECB, with V. Kulikov being the executive editor of the journal. The period ended with the fall of the USSR and, as a result, the reorganization of the All-Union Council into a number of national and also confessional associations. The period from 1972 to 1988 was characterised by stability. There were advances in the area of publications, but no significant changes until the end of Perestroika. The final years of the AUCECB, 1988-1993, which demonstrated the decay of a solid structure, was also reflected in its publications. The deconstruction of the All-Union Council meant the end of one significant phase in the longer history of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in Russia. The period 1972 to 1988 built on the results of the ECB's development in previous years, with all its achievements and failures in identity building, through its publications in particular.

c. The period 1945 -1971

1. First years of the AUCECB (1944-1949)

The first period of the AUCECB's publishing activities may be characterised, in general, as a period of searching for identity. In those years *BV* referred to a great variety of plans, which sometimes seem unrealistic or self-contradictory. Nevertheless, it is possible to see two significant directions in which *BV* developed during this first period.

Firstly, the editorial board clearly attempted to position *BV* so that it would have the level of importance that *Khristianin* and *Baptist* had had among Evangelical Christians and Baptists in previous years. They borrowed material, structure, and design from those journals.[201] In this early period it is noteworthy that even though AUCECB leaders took pains to stress the equality of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the new denomination, those who can be termed Prokhanov's followers apparently had more influence in the sphere of publishing. The great majority of key articles in *BV*, as well as a number of AUCECB projects, sprang from Evangelical Christian sources. Prokhanov and Kargel, the shaping figures of the Evangelical Union, were the most popular authors in the pages of *BV* in 1945-1949. At the same time, the formation of *BV* showed that a mere restoration of the

[201] The design of *BV* was very similar to that of the *Baptist*.

evangelical movement of the 1920s was not possible in the post-war Soviet Union. The ideas that were important to a previous generation had to be given new meanings in new circumstances.[202]

Secondly, *BV* clearly reflected efforts by the AUCECB to find its place within the structure of Soviet bureaucracy. Apparently, the government, and to a certain extent the Union's leaders, considered the All-Union Council as a kind of governmental "ministry of sectarian affairs" under the umbrella of the CARC. But the AUCECB had to prove that Communist society needed to have such a ministry. This was difficult when there were questions about whether the Soviet state needed religious sectarians at all. Unlike the Russian Orthodox Church, the Evangelical Christians-Baptists could boast neither of an important cultural heritage nor of great influence in the society. What can be observed in the early issues of *BV* are proposals made by the Union regarding different social roles that the AUCECB might play. The most obvious of these was fostering believers in the Communist spirit, preventing religious disorders, and unifying ethnic minorities, especially within the territories occupied by Soviet troops after World War II.[203] But the closure of the journal in 1949 demonstrates that none of these roles was vital to the Soviet authorities. It seems that the only substantial benefit that the Communist regime expected from evangelicals was in the area of international peace-making. But this was not an issue at the start of the Cold War.

The first year in which *BV* was published had special importance in the life of Soviet people. First of all, it was the year when World War II came to its close. The Soviet Union had been involved in war for four years and its end meant a massive shift in the internal life and foreign policy of the country. Only three issues of the periodical were published in 1945. The fact that the number of issues was lower than had been planned and promised was not explained directly in the periodical. At the same time, in the New Year Greeting, the editorial board made clear that any new materials written specifically for *BV* would be more than welcome,[204] and it is reasonable to conclude from this that the editorial board simply did not have sufficient resources to produce more than three issues during the first year of publication. The number of people involved in the leadership of the AUCECB was relatively small and the work they had to accomplish was immense.

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[202] Thus the concept of a Cultural Christian revolution, an idea that Prokhanov promoted, was converted into the notion of a Christian-patriot. Kargel's evangelical mysticism was developed to include the idealization of a life of holy devotion, isolated from the life of mainstream society.

[203] Sawatsky, pp. 92-97.

[204] 'Ot izdatel'stva'[Editorial], *BV*, vol. 1 (1946), p.3.

The activity of the AUCECB in 1945 consisted mainly in gathering information about, and helping to unify various evangelical groups at the time when the Union was expanding both in territory and in denominational variety. During the October Congress of 1944 three plenipotentiaries were appointed to supervise the regions of Ukraine, Belorussia and Northern Caucasus.[205] In 1945, the All-Union Council reported on six plenipotentiaries and 19 regional superintendents.[206] By the beginning of 1947 the number of the persons involved had increased to more than 50.[207] The role of Union officers consisted in the creation and supervision of a bureaucratic hierarchical network that was designed to ensure total control over local churches. The plenipotentiaries and superintendents were appointed by the Council, to whom they were fully accountable.[208] At the same time, local churches were supposed to follow all the regulations coming from the officers, who were called "men ruling over the brothers".[209]

In spite of the disquiet and even disgust felt by many local believers at joining what was an obviously pro-governmental Union, most of the churches agreed to accept the unpalatable stipulations of the AUCECB because, as Sawatsky commented, "this was the only realistic way that they could hope to continue to exist in an unfriendly state".[210]As a result many hundreds of churches were registered in 1945 under the umbrella of the AUCECB.[211] One of the significant moves made by the AUCECB was its expansion into the Baltic countries which were occupied by Soviet troops. While the churches of Central Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Caucasus, and Siberia were largely culturally and linguistically homogeneous, sharing much of the same history, evangelical Christians in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had their own languages and histories. The situation was complicated by the ambiguity of ethnic relations between Russian speakers and Baltic peoples in the three countries. A similar situation could be observed in the western parts of Ukraine and Belorussia. Nevertheless, the representatives of the All-Union Council (Karev and N.

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[205] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[206] 'Izveshcheniia vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov' [Notifications of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists], *BV*, vol. 2 (1945), p. 42.

[207] Sawatsky, p. 91.

[208] Y.,Zhidkov, 'Neskol'ko slov o rabote VSEKhB' [Some words about the work of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 1 (1946), p. 34.

[209] Savinsky, Part II, p. 180. As is evident from the previous chapter, this structure was not completely new. It was elaborated by the Baptist Union during the period of Pobedonostsev's persecutions.

[210] Sawatsky, p. 91.

[211] See Protokoly SDR [Protocols of the CARC] (1944-1945), v. 2, docs. 49-52, 54-57, 59-72, 74-95 (held in the State Archive of the Russian Federation, CARC department).

Levindanto), during visits to Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian churches, succeeded in convincing a large number of evangelicals,[212] some of whom were adapting to new denominational structures within their own countries, to join the new Union.[213]

A possibly even more difficult task was persuading Pentecostals to join a Union which was dominated by Evangelical Christians and Baptists. There were a number of Pentecostal churches of different kinds across Russia.[214] They seemed to some observers to be continuing the tradition of Russian mystical sects, such as *Khlisty* or *Priguny*,[215] and they included practices that could be traced back to the eighteenth century.[216] Their common trait was their absolute commitment to all the experiences of the Holy Spirit which they believed they saw in the New Testament. Speaking in tongues *(glossolalia)* formed the very heart of Pentecostal worship, and in services this could last for many hours.[217] It was obvious that with its desire for control the Communist government would not allow groups which operated in such spontaneous ways to have their own Union. Although Pentecostals in the USSR had had several Unions in the 1920s-1930s,[218] the CARC refused to allow them official recognition in the 1940s.[219] As a result, the only possibility for them to gain state registration was by becoming part of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists Union.

In August 1945 leaders of the two Pentecostal groups both known as 'Christians of Evangelical Faith' had long consultations with the AUCECB in Moscow.[220] Finally,

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[212] Mostly Baptists (see Sawatsky, p. 96).

[213] This process was studied in details in the thesis by T. Pilli, 'Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Estonia: The Shaping of Identity, 1945-1991' (PhD thesis, International Baptist Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2007), pp.19-24, published as T. Pilli, *Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008).

[214] The largest were *Khristiane Evangelskoy Very* (Christians of Evangelical Faith), *Khristiane Very Evangelskoy* (Christians of Evangelical Faith - the translation is the same), and *Khristiane v Dukhe Apostolskom* or *Iedinstvenniki* (Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles). 'Oneness Pentecostals' belonged to the Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles.

[215] B.I. Ivanov *Religion in the USSR* (Munich, 1960), p. 237.

[216] For example, an episode of the novel of M. Gor'kii, *Zhizn' Klima Samgina* [Life of Klim Samgin] (Sobranie sochinenii v 16 tomakh, v.13, Moscow: Pravda, 1979), pp. 357-359, describes a worship service of *Khlisty* in the first decade of the twentieth century which is very similar to Pentecostal services in Russia today.

[217]A.T. Moskalenko, *Piatidesiatniki* [Pentecostals] (Moscow: IPL, 1966), p. 30.

[218] The two largest Unions in that period were *Smorodintsy* in the north (from 1913) and *Voronayevtsy* in the South of Ukraine (from the 1920s). There is as yet no scholarly history of Pentecostalism in Russia.

[219] V.A. Slobodyanik, *Ocherki po istorii piatidesiatnichestva* [Sketches of the history of the Pentecostals] (Kiev: Irpen Bible Seimnary of ECB, 2000), pp. 111-112..

[220] A.Karev, 'Eshche odin shag v dele edinstva' [One more step to unity], *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), pp.7-8.

Pentecostal representatives and leaders of the ECB signed the so-called August Agreement. According to this document, Pentecostals received the right to join the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. Moreover, they were able to have representatives on the Executive Board of the AUCECB.[221] At the same time, Pentecostals accepted a ruling that they would not practise *glossolalia* publicly.[222] It is clear that such an agreement was satisfactory neither for Pentecostals, for whom speaking in tongues was a significant part of their identity, nor for Baptists, who had repeatedly condemned Pentecostals for heresy and proselytism and expected little change in their conduct.[223] This was an arrangement made without enthusiasm. The processes of unification were completed during the Conference of the AUCECB that took place from 19 to 27 August 1945. *BV* reported, without any reference to the controversial nature of what happened, that representatives of the Pentecostals and of the Baltic Churches signed all the necessary unification documents and visited the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults.[224] In typical fashion, *BV* avoided mention of problems. The significance of the unity that had been achieved (not without state pressure) was symbolically expressed in the establishment of a new church holiday,[225] the Day of Unity. The holiday was celebrated on the anniversary of the birth of the AUCECB on 28 October.[226]

Throughout 1946, the number of local churches attaching themselves to the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists continued to grow. Multiple visits of AUCECB emissaries to meet regional leaders and congregations contributed a great deal to this growth. *BV* played an important part in all of this by regularly publishing reports by I.G. Ivanov and others about their trips.[227] One of the most important achievements of this year was the expansion of the Council's influence to Moldova and the western parts of Ukraine, as a result of Ivanov's

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[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid.

[223] Slobodyanik, in *Ocherki po istorii piatidesiatnichestva* [Sketches of the history of the Pentecostals], pp.86-111, gives examples of conflicts between Baptists and Pentecostals. The dangers of Pentecostalism were seen by Baptists as especially involving a threat to the newly converted, who could be attracted by its emotional spirit.

[224] 'Vsem obshchinam evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov v SSSR' [To all congregations of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the USSR], *BV*, vol. 3(1945), p. 5.

[225] Church holidays (*prazdniki*) were not celebrated outside the communities. Believers were not free from work on those days. But they were allowed to have an extra worship service on a church holiday.

[226] *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), p. 5.

[227] See I.G. Ivanov, 'V Zakorpatskoi oblasti the USSR' [In Zakarpatskaya oblast of the Ukrainian SSR], *BV*, vol. 6 (1946), p. 55. See also reports on visits by M. Orlov to Republics in Central Asia: M.A. Orlov, 'Moia poezdka v Sredneaziatskie respubliki' [My trip to the Central Asian republics], *BV*, vol. 3 (1946), p.21.

journey to these regions. Several groups of evangelicals that had emerged from the activities of the Exclusive branch of the Brethren movement, called Free Churches (or *Darbisti* [Darby Bretheren]), joined the Union during conferences that took place in Uzhgorod and Mukachevo.[228] The Union expanded not only through absorbing other churches but also through attracting newly converted persons who became members of churches that already were part of the Union. Y. Zhidkov, AUCECB president, wrote in *BV* about congregations that had increased their membership by 30% in just one year.[229] This rate of church growth caused much anxiety for Communist officials from the CARC who put pressure on AUCECB leaders to slow down the growth of local communities.

The major problems that the AUCECB encountered in 1946 were related to tensions between churches from the Evangelical Christian and Baptist traditions on the one hand, and the Pentecostals on the other. Many Pentecostals did not follow the terms of the August Agreement. They did not cease their practice of speaking in tongues and their meetings continued to be marked by prophecies. These were both highly controversial. They also continued to practise the rite of foot washing. The representatives of the Pentecostals on the AUCECB, D. Ponomarchuk and I. Panko, who were being forced to try and control their churches, sent a circular letter condemning what they called the indecent conduct of extremists, and threatening to excommunicate all "prophets".[230]

In 1946, the AUCECB started a project that became one of its most important, central activities, namely the developing of international relationships. Leaders of the AUCECB were already involved in correspondence with the Baptist World Alliance in 1942, before the formal establishment of the Union.[231] However, links were to extend well beyond the Baptist community. *BV* noted that the Anglican leader, Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, a Christian Marxist (often known as the "Red Dean"), visited the Moscow Baptist Church in 1945.[232] In 1946, a delegation of the Council was allowed to travel abroad for the first time since the end of the 1920s. *BV* duly reported. This delegation consisted of only two leaders, M. Golyayev and A. Andreev, who visited Stockholm and participated in meetings of the

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[228] *HECB*, p. 234.

[229] Y. Zhidkov, 'Nash otchet' [Our report], *BV*, vol. 1 (1947), p. 13.

[230] *HECB*, p. 237.

[231] Sawatsky, p. 86.

[232] 'Izveshcheniia vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov, [Notifications of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists], *BV*, vol. 2 (1945), pp. 40-42. The report noted that Johnson was awarded the Order of the Red Banner at the end of the war, for his 'outstanding work as chairman of the joint committee for Soviet Aid'.

Swedish Baptist Union, celebrating the 90th anniversary of Baptists in Sweden.[233] In the same year the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, Louie D. Newton, visited the AUCECB offices.[234]

The years 1946 and 1947 saw a broadening within the pages of *BV* of the range of topics. Many more articles were written specifically for the periodical in 1946 compared to 1945. A survey of articles in 1946 shows that there were devotional features as well as articles on history, Bible studies, and doctrine. This was the first year when the *BV* editorial board produced six issues of the periodical, as had been the plan. The wider events in the world in this period were momentous, and they affected the ECB churches. 1947 saw the basis laid for the Cold War, which was to last for the next 40 years.[235] Western democratic countries, allies of the Soviet Union during World War II, now turned into enemies, and the position of Baptists, who had traditionally been considered by Russian authorities as bearers of Western ideology, became quite precarious. The situation was further aggravated by the growth of the AUCECB. In 1947 a further group of Pentecostals, Christians in the Spirit of the Apostles or *Smorodintsy* (named after their leader Nikolai Smorodin),[236] joined the Union.[237] The AUCECB's growth meant that the government had a mechanism to control more and more evangelicals, but the growth also contradicted the Communist theory of the gradual disappearance of religion in a socialist state.[238] As a result, the government considered the ECB Union as a threat, in spite of its pro-governmental character.[239] In order to survive, the AUCECB had to prove two things to the government: firstly, its complete loyalty; and secondly, its ability to control the masses of evangelical believers. *BV* was central to both these tasks.

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[233] M.I.Goliaev, 'Poezdka v Shvetsiiu i Finliandiiu tovarishcha predsedatelia VSEKhB Goliaeva M.I. i chlena VSEKhB Andreeva A.L.' [Trip to Sweden and Finland by the vice-president of the AUCECB M.I. Goliaev and a member of the AUCECB A.L. Andereev], *BV*, vol. 4 (1946), p. 9.

[234] *HECB*, p. 255.

[235] M. Geller, A. Nekrich, *Istoriia Rossii 1917-1995* [History of Russia 1917-1995] (Moscow: MIK, 1996), pp. 503-506.

[236] See footnote 19, above. *Smorodintsy* was the oldest branch of Russian Pentecostalism, which spread within the Russian Empire from Estonia: see Slobodyanik, *Ocherki po istorii piatidesiatnichestva* [Sketches of the history of the Pentecostals], pp. 20-21.

[237] Sawatsky, p. 95.

[238] F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, in K. Marx, F. Engel's, *Sochineniia* (Moscow: IPL, 1961, v. 20), pp.329-330.

[239] See Sawatsky, p. 62.

As a matter of fact, by 1947 Union leaders had already achieved significant success in building administrative structures and control mechanisms. The Union was organized according to a strict hierarchical structure: from the top, from the presidium to the plenum of the Union to chief superintendents (for the Ukraine and the Baltic countries) to superintendents[240] and to local pastors/presbyters.[241] The AUCECB had 15 full-time employees who worked in its central building in Maly Vuzovsky 3, Moscow.[242] Although this system was frequently ineffective (which was also true for all other Soviet administrative institutions),[243] it created a picture of control. It also enabled the All-Union leadership to say the things that the Soviet authorities wanted to hear. Thus, in an editorial in the first issue of *BV* in 1948, Zhidkov boasted of AUCECB "achievements", such as slowing church growth. [244] Quotations by Zhidkov on the dynamics of church growth are often very contradictory. At times he significantly exaggerates the number of members of local churches and at other times he strives to minimize those same numbers.[245] Actually, Zhidkov had an insoluble problem. On the one hand, the authorities said he had to restrict the growth of local churches. On the other hand, the authorities wanted *BV* to show foreign observers that believers prospered in the Soviet Union.[246] In Zhidkov's annual report to the local churches in 1949,[247] his desire is clearly to control local communities. Thus he addresses the keeping of proper order in church choirs, which were very important in AUCECB churches. Zhidkov was

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[240] Plenipotentiaries were renamed superintendents after 1 April 1947: see 'Izveshcheniia VSEKhB' [Notifications of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 2 (1947), p.61.

[241] Savinsky, Part II, p. 192. The word presbyter was commonly used.

[242] Y. Zhidkov, 'Vzgliad nazad' [Look back], *BV*, vol. 1 (1948), p. 9.

[243] Savinsky, Part II, p. 192.

[244] *BV*, vol. 1 (1948), pp. 3-10.

[245] In Zhidkov's 1948 article (Ibid) he says: 'We should not pursue an increase in the numbers of church members.' But several lines later he says: 'Believers in the USSR have complete freedom for all kinds of religious activity. Paul once said: "a great door for effective work has opened to me" (1 Cor. 16: 9). These words of the Apostle are a marvelous reality for us.' Studies show that the growth of churches after World War II was much slower than Moscow imagined. But even a moderate increase in religious activity frightened the Communist authorities. See A.V.Sinichkin, 'O dinamike rosta bratstva EKhB s 1945 po 1965 god' [About the dynamics of growth of the ECB brotherhood from 1945 to 1965], in *Fenomen Evraziiskogo Protestantizma: Materialy konferentsii bogoslovskogo obschestva Evrazii*, ed. M. Cherenkov (Odessa: BOE, 2003), pp. 5-9.

[246] According to the report by Karev to the extended session of the Council in 1948: see A.V. Karev, 'Doklad general'nogo sekretaria VSEKhB A.V.Kareva na rasshirennom soveshchanii VSEKhB' [Speech of the general secretary of the AUCECB A.V.Karev to an extended meeting of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 5 (1948), 1/6 of the copies of *BV* were sent abroad.

[247] Y. Zhidkov, 'Starii god, novii god' [Old Year, New Year], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 3.

unhappy that the atmosphere at worship services was too emotional, that there were cases in which unbaptized persons were involved in choir activities, and that lyrics were used which had not been previously approved by AUCECB representatives.[248]

In October 1948 an extended session of the Council took place,[249] and alongside approving new Statutes, the Council summed up the achievement of its first four years of existence as consisting in the legalization of local communities of the ECB.[250] As soon as this was done, however, the atheistic authorities (in the words of Savinsky) "put the iron curtain down on the path of Christian revival."[251] After 1948, any further development/expansion for evangelicals became impossible. The second issue of *BV* in 1949 became its last issue till the death of Stalin in 1953. Since in the first two 1949 issues of *BV* there is reference to a new series of articles,[252] it seems reasonable to conclude that the closing of the periodical came unexpectedly for its editorial board. Nevertheless, against the general background in the USSR this event was predictable. The major political factors at work were the beginning of an active stand-off with Western democracies, the victory of communism in China, the successful production of the A-bomb in the USSR, and the formation of NATO;[253] and the ideological crusade in the USSR against "cosmopolitism" (construed as a lack of patriotism and opposition to traditional Russian values), which reached its peak in 1949 and led to severe persecution of all ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.[254] The AUECB was at the mercy of these larger forces.

2. Intermediate sub-period (1949-1953)

Although no *BV* publications appeared in these years, some comment is necessary. The information about this sub-period is scarce, because *BV* itself was the most important source of such information, but the few documents show that the AUCECB continued the work of seeking to unify all evangelical groups under its umbrella, despite at times facing substantial internal opposition, especially from Pentecostals. The development of churches was slowed

[248] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[249] 'Izveshcheniia VSEKhB' [Notifications of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), pp. 67-68.

[250] Sawatsky, p. 98.

[251] Savinsky, Part II, p.181.

[252] For example, *BV*, vol. 2 (1949) started to publish chapters from Kargel's book "Light from the shadows of future blessings", devoted to Old Testament sacrifices.

[253] W.C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet foreign policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973), pp. 30-33.

[254] See Geller,Nekrich, *Istoriia Rossii 1917-1995* [History of Russia 1917-1995], pp. 539-545.

and many were closed.[255] In spite of the obvious malevolence of the authorities toward the Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the AUCECB central committee continued its openly pro-governmental policy. This "singing the praises of" the Communist authorities can be found in practically all the public messages of the AUCECB from that period. Expressions like "let us fervently pray at the manger of Christ that the peace declared by the angels be fulfilled on the earth … according to the call of our precious Soviet Motherland"[256] are typical.

The greatest AUCECB success of these years was in finding a niche in Communist society where it could be useful to the state. It is not that the AUCECB actively sought such a place, but only by being useful to the regime could the AUCECB survive. Given the determined work of professional anti-religionists, survival of Christian institutions was not certain.[257] Domestically, the Russian Orthodox Church was attacked by *nomenklatura* (Soviet bureaucracy).[258] Internationally the position was complicated. The Soviet Union had a negative international image,[259] and the Soviet government, while at times provoking the West, was aware of Western public opinion, but the idea of the worldwide victory of Communism, which had been abandoned in previous years, was revived by Stalin and his successors. The project of "liberating the nations from capitalism"[260] was articulated very clearly at the 1952 Congress of the CPSU. The most important role in this project belonged to Western communist parties that were, on the one hand, very influential in some countries of Western Europe (as Italy, Greece, and France), and, on the other hand, met enormous resistance from anti-communists, especially in the United States. The possibility that representatives of the ECB could soften the attitudes of Western governments meant that some Soviet leaders showed interest in the presence of the ECB on the international scene.[261]

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[255] State archives preserved many 'Decisions of closure' by local authorities: see e.g. *Resheniye o zakritii* [Decision of closure] (The Central State Archive of Ukraine, Kherson department, dep.1979, def2-3).

[256] 'Rozhdestvenskoye pis'mo VSEKhB pomestnym obschinam ot 17 Noyabrya 1951' [*Christmas Letter to the local congregations* by the AUCECB, Nov. 17, 1951] (Archive of the RUECB, N.1600)

[257] T.A. Chumachenko, *Church and state in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev years* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 87-143.

[258] *Istoriia religii v SSSR* [History of Religion in the USSR], pp. 199-200.

[259] *The churches of Europe under communist governments* (Written by a member of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations at the Council's request. Church information board, 1954), pp. 7-8.

[260] I. Stalin, *Rech k dvadtsatomu s'ezdu KPSS. 14 oktiabria 1952 goda* [Speech to the XIX congress of the CPSU, Oct. 14, 1952] (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1952), p. 9.

[261] Soviet Baptists potentially had a place of special importance in the political game since they could speak of their positive views about the USSR to many prominent anti-communists.

Against this background, particularly of a desire for greater international influence, the Soviet government began to stress peace-making. In 1949 the Soviets proposed to organize a World Peace Council.[262] The AUCECB became an active member from the very beginning.[263] A letter from the AUCECB leadership to senior presbyters demonstrates that its leaders participated in a number of peace-making projects.[264] The peace-making endeavours helped the All-Union Council to become bolder in its dialogue with the state. In 1952 an official state-organised meeting of all Churches and religious groups in the USSR took place, and ECB president Y. Zhidkov was required to act as the representative of the Protestant believers of the USA and other Western countries at that event.[265] The meeting produced an official publication to be read by members of the Russian Orthodox Church and the ECB. However, the AUCECB had no mass media at that time and in its circular letter it suggested that each church look for these materials in the state press. This message was an obvious hint that it was absolutely necessary to resume publishing of *BV*, and this hint was heard by the authorities.[266] But unfulfilled plans to publish a book on the history of the ECB[267] demonstrate that the Council members were often overly optimistic in their aspirations, after having communicated with their state patrons. Nonetheless, 1953 saw the resumption of the publication of *BV*. The fact that the first issue of *BV* was produced only two months after Stalin's death proves that everything was ready for such resumption.

3. "Dark period"[268] of 1953-1960

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[262] Sawatsky, p.122.

[263] 'Ot Vsesoyuznogo Sovieta Ievangel'skikh Khristian – Baptistov' [From the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol.1954(1), p.76, Ko vsem starshim presviteram VSEKhB [To all senior presbyters of ECB] (Nov. 25, 1953, Archive of the RUECB).

[264] Ko vsem starshim presviteram VSEKhB [To all senior presbyters of ECB] (Jan. 5, 1951, Archive of the RUECB, N86).

[265] Conférence de toutes les églises et associations religieuses de l'U.R.S.S. pour la défense de la paix dans le monde: Zagorsk, Troitsé-Serguiéva Lavra, 9-12 mai 1952: (documents). (Moscow: Patriarcat de Moscou, 1952), pp.165-167.

[266] 'Ko vsem starshim presviteram VSEKhB' [To all senior presbyters of ECB] (May 26, 1952, Archive of the RUECB, N82).

[267] Zhidkov, 'Vzgliad nazad' [Look back], p. 10.

[268] A term used by Savinsky, Part II, p. 198. The epithet 'dark' is used because this was the most difficult period for the Union in all years of its existence.

This period in the history of the Soviet Union has been called the Khrushchev Thaw.[269] It was the time when the Communist regime demonstrated relative lenience to pluralism, especially in the cultural sphere. But believers enjoyed the "thaw" only in a very limited way. It is misleading to claim, as Hebly did, that the years 1954 to 1958 saw greater freedom of movement for the churches and believers.[270] Authors like Leopold Braun,[271] who saw no difference in attitude towards religion in the late Stalin period and in Khrushchev's "thaw", are closer to the truth. For example, in 1954 the Central Committee of the CPSU accepted a plan to fight religion.[272] However, closer analysis of the situation of religion in the USSR demonstrates that there were certain short periods when evangelical believers enjoyed more freedom.[273] One such period happened two or three years after Stalin's death. In 1955 the Council of Ministers approved a simplified process for starting new religious organizations.[274] For the ECB, the efforts of their supporters inside the CARC also resulted in gaining permission to publish hymnals (1956) and Bibles (1957).[275] But Khrushchev and his colleagues announced a new plan to rebuild Communism, a scheme which (as announced) was to be completed by 1980.[276] This plan resulted in a revival, for a time, of Communist enthusiasm.[277] From this perspective, religion seemed to be an obstacle in the way of

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[269] After the title of the novel by Ilya Ehrenburg written in 1954: I. Erenburg, *Ottepel'* [Thaw] (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1956).

[270] J. A. Hebly, *Protestants in Russia* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1976), p.131.

[271] L.L.S. Braun, *Religion in Russia, from Lenin to Khrushchev: an uncensored account* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1959), pp. 77-88.

[272] 'O krupnykh nedostatkakh v nauchno-ateisticheskoi propagande i merakh ee uluchsheniia 7 iiula 1954 goda' [About the great disadvantages in scientific and atheistic propaganda and the means of their improvement. 7 July, 1954], in *KPSS v rezoliutsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*. v. 6. (Moscow: IPL, 1971), pp. 502-505.

[273] T.A. Chumachenko, *Church and state in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev years*, pp. 130-142.

[274] See *Postanovlenie Soveta Ministrov SSSR E Ob izmenenii poriadka otkrytiia molitvennykh zdanii* [Decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR about changes of procedure in opening church buildings] (Feb.17, 1955, State archive of Russian Federation, D. 1., L. 39).

[275] *BV*, vol. 6 (1963), p.16.

[276] This plan was published in *22-i s"ezd KPSS (17 — 31 oktiabria 1961 goda): Stenograficheskii otchet* [The 22nd Congress of the CPSU (17-31 October, 1961): verbatim report],(Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1962).

[277] One of the characters of Victor Pelevin's novel, *Chisla* [Numbers] (Moskva: EKSMO, 2009), p.129, ironically notes that the project of communism finally fell apart after it became clear that 'in 1980 that there will be the Olympic Games instead of communism'. The idea of communism never recuperated from the disappointment at the failure of Khrushchev's utopia.

happiness for the Soviet people. So persecution was inevitable. By the end of the 1950s the anti-religious programme had reached its peak, with mass closures of churches, believers expelled from educational institutions, and the creation of a network of spies. By the end of this period the AUCECB was about to stop its activities because it had become impossible to continue to work under the immense pressure of state interference.[278]

It is clear that *BV* could not reflect all the issues that the AUCECB encountered. Nevertheless, there are certain indications on the pages of *BV* of the difficulties faced at that time. Firstly, the number of issues of the periodical per year was reduced. Up to 1963, the planned number of six issues per year was achieved only once, namely in 1957. In 1959, only two issues of *BV* were published. This matched the number published just before the shutdown of the journal in 1949. Secondly, it is noticeable that increasing numbers of articles were written under ideological pressure. Some of these articles had nothing to do with religion.[279] The problem for the Union was its excessive dependence on the state.[280] There were no larger meetings or congresses at which believers could discuss their problems.[281] The Union was ruled by a hierarchical vertical structure, with local superintendents possessing almost unlimited power in their regions. *BV* regularly published their reports which show that during their trips around their regions they promoted the policy of state control over religion. For example, the superintendent in the Kiev region, A. Mitskevich, reported:

> Training in the congregations returns positive results. Candidates for membership are put on thorough trial before they are accepted… The trial period for young applicants has been increased. At the same time, leaders of the congregations call believers to strengthen the fulfilment of their civil duty towards the motherland, to participate in

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[278] Savinsky, Part II, pp. 196-197.

[279] For example, 'Obrashchenie Verkhovnogo Soveta Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik k parlamentam i pravitel'stvam vsekh gosudarstv mira' [Address of the Supreme Council of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics to parliaments and governments of all countries], *BV*, vol. 1(1960), p.3; 'Rezolutsiia Verkhovnoko Soveta Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik o prekraschenii ispytanii atomnogo I vodorodnogo oruzhiia' [Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics about the cessation of atomic and hydrogen weapon tests], *BV*, vol. 2 (1958), p.7.

[280] The question to what extent this dependence was absolutely necessary was later discussed many times, for example with the Council of Churches of the ECB. See A.V. Sinichkin, 'Dialog mezhdu STsEKhB i VSEKhB 1961-1972 gg.' [Dialogue between the AUCECB and CCECB from 1961 to 1972] (in *Put' bogopoznaniia (Theognosis)* (10:40-81; 11:82-128; 12:87-127). But at that time any legal religious group was in the same situation as the ECB.

[281] The most significant meetings after the congress of 1944 were plenums of the AUCECB which involved only appointed officers of the Union.

> the social life of the country, and also to take an active part in the great work of fighting for peace. [282]

The stress on "fighting for peace" is significant. One of the most prominent activities of the AUCECB became its international diplomatic endeavours, with the first and most official part of this work being to promote a pro-Communist version of peace-making. The AUCECB was an active participant of the World Peace Council and it sent its representatives to almost all conferences and meetings of this organization. *BV* featured its pages many documents related to the organization's affiliation with the World Peace Council.[283] At the same time, the documents published in *BV* show that, in spite of the permanent presence of ECB representatives in peace-making organizations, they never occupied any significant position there. The second direction in developing international relations was ecumenical. The AUCECB itself was a kind of ecumenical assembly of different Protestant denominational groups. So there was some logic in its contact with leaders of various denominations abroad, including Methodists,[284] Quakers,[285] Molokans,[286] and the Armenian Orthodox Church.[287] A major goal of the Council in its international ecumenical activities was to promote a positive image of the USSR.[288] The idea of approaching ecumenism from

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[282] 'Soobshcheniia iz obshchin' [News from congregations], *BV*, vol. 2 (1956), p.59.

[283] For example, in 1967 there were 18 documents from different peace-making organizations published in *BV*.

[284] 'Rozhdestvenskie i novogodnie privetstviia iz zarubezhnykh stran' [Christmas and New Year greetings from foreign countries], *BV*, vol. 1 (1963), p.7, p.10.

[285] 'Poseshchenie kvakerami Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [The visit of Quakers to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), pp.13-16.

[286] 'Telegramma bratstvu dukhovnykh khristian molokan' [Telegram to the brotherhood of Spiritual Christians - Molokans], *BV*, vol. 5 (1955), p.79; Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Molokane iz SShA - nashi gosti, [Molokans from the USA are our guests], *BV*, vol. 4 (1957), p.69. Colonies of Russian immigrant *Molokans* were numerous in America, though they almost disappeared in the USSR. The AUCECB was the closest organization to them in their historical motherland.

[287] 'Ego Sviateishestvu Patriarkhu-Katolikosu vsekh armian Vazgenu I' [To his holiness Patriarch Catolicos of all Armenians, Vazgen I], *BV*, vol.5-6 (1958), pp. 5-6.

[288] An example of the AUCECB acting as an agent of Soviet propaganda is in the book *Quakers visit Russia* (London: Friends' Peace Committee, 1953). The book demonstrates the change of attitude of the group of Quakers (from UK), who became convinced, after their visit to the USSR and conversations with AUCECB leaders in 1951, that there was religious freedom in the USSR and that the intentions of the Soviets were peaceful. This visit was obviously planned in detail by the KGB. It included attendance at Moscow Central Baptist Church (pp.24-31). During the visit the president of the Union (Zhidkov) spoke of his 'sincere' concern about the Korean War (p. 27).

an ecclesial standpoint was virtually non-existent. Indeed both Baptists and Evangelical Christians were rather suspicious of the official ecumenical movement, and the AUCECB joined the World Council of Churches only in 1962.[289] The editorial board of *BV* carried materials explaining the essence and the limitations of ecumenism.[290] The third aspect of AUCECB's international activity was its participation in the work of the Baptist World Alliance[291] and of the European Baptist Federation,[292] establishing links with Baptist churches all over the world. This was not of such interest to the Soviet regime. For example, *BV* did not mention the visit of the AUCECB delegation to West Berlin for the congress of the EBF in 1958. This visit had great importance for Baptists in Europe but there was no ideological message to convey. At the same time, *BV* reported in detail about the 'Christian conference of peace' in Prague, since this was pro-Soviet.[293]

While the foreign policy of the AUCECB resulted in certain positive results in the years up to 1960, the internal problems of the Union were increasing and could not be solved by the means proposed by its leaders. The superintendents were playing almost the same role in the churches as that which was being exercised by those Soviet officials charged with ensuring ideological control in secular state organizations, and when ideological pressure from the Soviet leadership became intense (and even brutal) it inevitably produced conflicts between believers and their leaders.[294] Such cases received a special name, "*diotrephstvo*".[295] Another set of conflicts was the continuing dissent by Pentecostals who did not want to obey the August agreement.[296] The increasing level of tension in the AUCECB led to a crisis in its inner management and to the split in the Union at the beginning of the 1960s.

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[289] *HECB*, p. 262.

[290] E.g. see A.V. Karev, 'Kak vozniklo i razvivalos' ekumenicheskoe dvizhenie' [How the ecumenical movement appeared and developed], *BV*, vol. 2 (1959), p. 65.

[291] In the 1950s the AUCECB resumed involvement with the BWA after a break which had lasted since 1934 (see. *HECB*, p. 256). A large delegation from the USSR went to the Jubilee Congress in London in 1955: A.V. Karev, 'Poezdka predstavitelei VSEKhB v Angliiu' [The visit of the representatives of the AUCECB to England], *BV*, vol. 5 (1955), p. 5.

[292] The AUCECB was forced to refuse to participate in the EBF's first congress in Copenhagen in 1952. But it participated in all the congresses of EBF from 1958 onwards (see *HECB*, p.259).

[293] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Khristianskaia konferentsiia mira v Prage' [The Christian conference in Prague], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 7.

[294] N.A. Levindanto, 'O sluzhiteliakh pomestnoi tserkvi' [About ministers of local churches], *BV*, vol. 6 (1957), pp. 12-14

[295] From Diotrephes (3 John 9), who loved to be first.

[296] This Pentecostal dissent was not properly reflected in *BV*. Slobodyanik, who used to be a superintendent of the AUCECB, described very serious tensions between Baptists and Pentecostals in that

4. Dissent begins (1961-1964)

This split in the Union has attracted the attention of many historians of the ECB.[297] An AUCECB Letter of Instructions and also New Statutes were written in accordance with the demands of the CARC and were circulated in 1960. These documents included instructions to reduce the number of baptisms among the 18-30 age group in the churches as much as possible and to ensure that children, both under school age and school age, should, as a rule, not attend services.[298] For many authors outside the Soviet Union, the protests against these instructions demonstrated that Soviet believers were deeply discontented with the religious policy of the USSR. The history of the Union's split over these documents, in which what was called an Initiative Group (the *Initsiativniki*) left the AUCECB, has been described in detail many times.[299] Michael Bourdeaux noted that "the atheist press from time to time carried astonishingly detailed accounts" of the conflict.[300] But the publications of the AUCECB in the first decade after the split did not pay any serious attention to the division. Many ordinary believers, it must be deduced, remained unaware of the problems inside the Union. The problem of dissent was first mentioned when the materials of the 1963 AUCECB Congress were published in the last issue of 1963.[301] The congress took place from 15 to17 October 1963. Initially, the CARC did not allow a congress to convene, but after AUCECB meetings started, the numbers swelled to become a congress.[302] The call for a congress (the first after the constituent one in 1944) was one of the chief demands of the *Initsiativniki*, so this progress in the development of the AUCECB in the 1960s was a direct result of the dissent, though the *Initsiativniki* (also known as the Reform Baptists or the underground believers) never enjoyed the fruit of their efforts.

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period: Slobodyanik, *Ocherki po istorii piatidesiatnichestva* [Sketches of the history of the Pentecostals], pp. 116-121.

[297] One of the most detailed descriptions can be found in Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious ferment in Russia: Protestant opposition to Soviet religious policy* (London: MacMillan, 1968).

[298] See Savinski, Part II, pp. 202-205.

[299] As well as the work by Sawatsky and Bordeaux there is, as noted, J.A. Hebly, *Protestants in Russia* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1976).

[300] M. Bourdeaux, 'Religious liberty in the Soviet Union: Baptists in the early days of protest (1960-1966)', in Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives* (Prague: IBTS, 2007) (pp.119-132), p. 124.

[301] 'Vsesoiuznyi s"ezd evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v Moskve' [The All-Union congress of Evangelical Christian-Baptists in Moscow], *BV*, vol. 6 (1963), p. 22.

[302] Savinski, Part II, p. 227.

The Conference-Congress had some important consequences for the publishing activities of the AUCECB. It changed the aims of *BV* which had been established in 1944. "The Report of the Presidium of the AUCECB about the work of the AUCECB" proposed (or rather revealed) a new agenda for publishing *Bratsky Vestnik*, stating:

> The journal *Bratsky Vestnik* has three departments:
>
> 1. A department devoted to the issues of peace in the world,
> 2. A spiritual (theological) department,
> 3. A department for information about the life and work of our brotherhood as well as about churches in the USSR and abroad.
>
> The department devoted to peace issues has as its goal to inform the brotherhood about everything that happens in world Christianity for the defence of humankind against the danger and threat of a new war. Also it exhorts all Christians to pray for peace in the whole world and to work for the sake of peace on earth.
>
> The spiritual/theological department strives to provide for our brothers and sisters the best spiritual nourishment and also to furnish presbyters, preachers, and workers of our churches with spiritual educational materials. We should note that, according to responses from our foreign brothers, the journal *Bratsky Vestnik*, because of its deep spiritual content, is considered one of the best theological journals.
>
> The third (information) department distributes information about the life and work of the AUCECB and our local communities. The editorial board of the journal deeply desires to extend this department and make it more interesting. The success of this desire depends on receiving information from our senior presbyters and presbyters. The more vivid and interesting their information is, the more vivid and interesting the part of *BV* produced by this department will be.[303]

In this agenda the ideological propagandistic role of peace-making is accepted in order to carry out theological education. On the pages of the journal, ideological materials sometimes made up more than half of all content in the early 1960s,[304] but this allowed the journal to continue with at least some of its spiritual work. At the same time, the third part (information) was often limited. The information supplied by senior presbyters and superintendents had to fit the criteria for publication, or it never appeared. Usually the publications on domestic affairs consist of optimistic reports of emissaries of the AUCECB about their visits to local churches. Such reports contain a standard set of elements, such as

- a reference to the geographical features and history of the locality;
- some information about good relations between believers and the local authorities;
- a short history of the community and its present condition;
- a report about a worship service (usually this was a special worship event devoted to some celebration, ordination, wedding, funeral);

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[303] Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[304] E.g., *BV*, vol. 4 (1965). That issue contained ten articles of an ideological character, eight spiritual articles and two informative articles.

- a sketch of the everyday life of ordinary believers;
- words of exhortation by the AUCECB officers to the community.[305]

Dissent became a real problem for the AUCECB only after the underground Council of Churches of the ECB (formed by the *Initsiativniki*) began to play a role on the international scene and the problems in the Union could be silenced no longer.[306] But at the plenum of the AUCECB held on 2-3 September 1964, when the issues of Christian unity were discussed, the *Initsiativniki* were not even mentioned.[307] It seems that problems with Pentecostals and issues connected with the Mennonites joining the Union were highlighted, rather than the split.[308] One of the Soviet specialists on evangelical sects, Viktor Krest'aninov, noted in the late 1960s:

> The leadership of the AUCECB strives to unify Pentecostals and Mennonites of all kinds and it has a certain success in this. At the same time, the process of unification and integration meets the opposite tendencies of disintegration and division. Those tendencies are growing, become overwhelming and prove the instability of that conglomerate of sects.[309]

However, there was actually a certain stabilization of the Union's life as the 1960s progressed, and this can be interpreted as one positive influence of the dissent. It seems that the authorities were afraid of losing control over the Baptists so they were forced to moderate the pressures on the leaders and members of registered churches. The improvement of relations between Baptist churches and the state could be noticed, for example, in a certain decentralization of the Union's management. Although the ideological impact of the state

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[305] E.g. A.V.K. (A.V. Karev), 'V Pribaltike' [In the Baltic region], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 74.

[306] Sawatsky writes: "Western Baptists did not become aware of the Reform Baptist movement until 1964 and remained poorly informed for a number of years subsequently. They were reassured by the AUCECB that this was an internal matter, not very significant, and that they would be hurting the AUCECB if they discussed it in public" (Sawatsky, p. 363). Passing on any information about *Initsiativniki* would contradict the policy of the AUCECB, which in this period tried to keep it secret from the world.

[307] The report of the plenum mentions only churches of the AUCECB 'not registered till now': R.K. (Editorial board), 'Rasshirennii plenum VSEKhB' [The extended plenum of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 6 (1964), p. 41. But there were no churches of the AUCECB in this category. The ECB churches belonged either to the AUCECB or to the Council of Churches of the ECB.

[308] R.K. (Editorial board), 'Rasshirennii plenum VSEKhB' [The extended plenum of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 6 (1964), pp. 41, 42.

[309] V.F. Krest'aninov, *Mennonity* [Mennonites] (Moscow: IPL, 1967).

was still strong enough after the Conference-Congress of 1963, publications – in particular *BV* - became more regular and less politicized since that time.[310]

5. Growing stagnation (1965-1970)

Although there was a degree of stability for the AUCECB in the later 1960s, this period also saw increasing stagnation. In 1964 Khrushchev was dismissed from the position of General Secretary of the CPSU following a conspiracy of top leaders.[311] The next long period in the history of Soviet leadership began with the rule of Leonid Brezhnev. This period gained the description "stagnation", and lasted practically until the days of Perestroika.[312] The two general characteristics of this period were, firstly, a relatively lenient approach to control in social and political life and, secondly, lack of any progress or development within the Soviet Union. These traits were observed in almost all areas of Soviet society, and affected the life of the AUCECB. The beginning of the Brezhnev era coincided with the All-Union Council leaders entering old age. Thus, the first issue of 1965 describes in detail the celebrations of the 70th birthday of the General Secretary of the AUCECB, A. Karev. The same year saw two important Council members mark their advanced years: I. Motorin became 70 years old and Y. Zhidkov reached his 80th birthday. Zhidkov died in the next year and Karev replaced him as head of the Union.[313] In the second half of the 1960s a new generation of Baptist leaders such as Alexei Bichkov, Arthur Mitskevich, Vitalii Kulikov, Yakov Dukhonchenko, and others entered the scene.

This period became a turning point in the relations of the AUCECB with the Reform Baptists. Issues of unity became a guiding theme for congresses that took place in 1966 and 1969.[314] However, these congresses did not lead to reconciliation. In fact, after the 1966 Congress, in direct opposition to the official line, the leader of *Initsiativniki*, Gennady Kruchkov, announced his famous slogan: "Collaboration with the AUCECB is collaboration with atheists."[315] This statement made crystal clear that relations between the two wings of

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[310] After 1963 the editorial board regularly issued six numbers of the journal though in the previous 19 years this happened only four times.

[311] Geller, Nekrich, *Istoriia Rossii 1917-1995* [History of Russia 1917-1995], p. 173.

[312] This term was invoked by M. Gorbachov in his report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU: *Materialy XXVII S"ezda KPSS* [Materials of the XXVII congress of the CPSU] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), p. 24.

[313] A.V. Karev, 'Yakov Ivanovich Zhidkov', *BV*, vol. 1 (1967), p. 51.

[314] The materials of those congresses were published in *BV*, vol.6 (1966) and *BV*, vol. 2 (1970) (entire volume).

[315] 'Obrascheniie ko vsem veruiuschim EKhB ispovedaniia ot sluzhitelei tserkvei, ob''edininnykh v sluzhenii STsEKhB' [Address to all believers of the ECB containing a confession from the ministers of the

ECB had broken down irretrievably. At the same time, the congresses were successful in strengthening the AUCECB's relations with other Protestant groups. The greatest achievement of the AUCECB at the end of the 1960s was that a number of Mennonites joined the Union.[316] More widely, the period from 1965 to 1970 saw a stabilization of relations between the Communists and the AUCECB. A certain freedom was granted, with the AUCECB receiving the opportunity to carry out legally a number of activities in areas where it had been restricted. In 1968 it received permission to start training church ministers via the Correspondence Bible Institute.[317] It also increased the number of its publications.[318] *BV* began to operate with thematic sections. Although the structure of these sections changed from year to year,[319] *BV* regularly included such aspects as "spiritual articles", "unity of Christians", "voice of Christians for the defence of peace", "history of Christianity", "documents and information from the AUCECB", "information from local communities", and "obituaries".[320]

d. The period 1972-1991

1. Shift in generations

The year 1971 was a turning point in the history of the AUCECB. The General Secretary of the AUCECB Alexander Karev died suddenly on 24 November 1971 at the age of 77, [321] a few days after the vice-president, S. Timchenko.[322] During the plenum that took place on 22

Churches united through ministry in the CCECB] (May, 1967, in Archive of the RUECB). There are other forms of this statement: 'Your salvation is in danger if you continue to have fellowship with AUCECB workers', and 'You cannot be in union with the AUCECB and in union with God at the same time' (G.K. Parker, *Baptists in Europe: History & Confessions of Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982), p.170).

[316] 'Rezoliutsiia soveshchaniia prezidiuma VSEKhB s predstaviteliami bratskikh mennonitov' [Resolution of the meeting of the presidium of the AUCECB and the representatives of the Mennonite Brethren], *BV*, vol. 4 (1967), p. 42.

[317] 'Otkrytie bibleiskikh kursov' [Openning of the Bible Courses], *BV*, vol. 4 (1968), p. 77.

[318] 'Doklad general'nogo sekretaria VSEKhB A.V.Kareva' [Report of the General Secretary of the AUCECB A.V.Karev], *BV*, vol. 2 (1970), pp. 33-35.

[319] For example, the editorial board included a section entitled 'music of hymns' only in 1966.

[320] This point is noteworthy. It indicates a process of ageing of members of the Union.

[321] The obituary used the word 'suddenly': 'Svetloi pamiati general'nogo sekretaria Vsesoiuznogo Soveta evangel'skikh khristian - baptistov A.V.Kareva', [In memory of the General Secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists A.V.Karev], *BV*, vol. 1 (1972), p. 50. The death was caused by cerebral hemorrhage.

[322] 'Pamiati zam.predsedatelia VSEKhB S.T.Timchenko', [In memory of Vice-President of the AUCECB S.T. Timchenko], *BV*, vol. 1 (1972), p. 68.

December 1971, Aleksey Bichkov was elected AUCECB General Secretary, and M. Zhidkov (son of Y. Zhidkov) and A. Klimenko became his deputies. The death of Karev meant a complete shift of generations among the ECB leaders.[323] Pastors who had seen the evangelical revival of the 1920s, had survived the Great Purge, and had laid the foundation of the AUCECB, were now succeeded by ministers raised during the post-war period.[324] The new board of the AUCECB consisted of leaders for whom the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists was the only form of the evangelical movement they knew. On the one hand, the new leaders venerated their ancestors as those who had succeeded in raising the brotherhood from ruins to relative prosperity twice, after the October Revolution and later after World War II.[325] Thus they showed extreme conservatism in almost all spheres of life, notably worship style.[326] On the other hand, the new leaders felt free from accusations of direct collaboration with atheists in the early periods of the AUCECB history.[327] This allowed them to criticize all separatists, namely independent churches,[328] Pentecostals and *Initsiativniki*.[329]

The history of this period can be divided into two unequal parts: 1)1972 to 1987. This was a period of stabilisation but also of some stagnation. However, publishing made significant advances. 2) 1988 to 1991. This was a period of revolutionary changes and the collapse of the USSR. These periods will be considered separately, and in looking at 1972 to

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[323] Some leaders survived Karev - I. Tatarchenko and I. Motorin died in 1972 and 1974 respectively (*HECB*, p. 250) - but they no longer played roles in the Union after Karev's death.

[324] Bichkov , for instance, was converted in 1949. See R.K. (Editorial board), 'Vnov' izbrannykh general'nyi sekretar' Vsesoiuznogo Soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [Newly elected general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 2 (1972), p. 67.

[325] For example, Zhidkov had been a vice president in Prokhanov's Union of Evangelical Christians from 1924 and its president after 1928. Karev had been one of the leading officers in the same Union (*HECB*, pp. 526, 534).

[326] Until the end of Perestroika the AUCECB demanded that all communities of the Union use only the hymnal 'Collection of spiritual songs' during worship services. This hymnal had been published in 1956.

[327] An important factor was that none of them had signed the Letter of Instructions of 1960 that had led to the split. Bichkov himself did not participate in debates between the AUCECB and the CCECB. At the same time, the AUCECB leadership's dependence on the CARC was still quite strong.

[328] Alongside the churches that belonged either to the AUCECB or to CCECB there were some *Avtonomniki* (autonomous churches).

[329] It was noteworthy that the first step by Bichkov in his new position was an attack on those who had broken the unity of evangelicals in the USSR. This attack took place during the Plenum of the AUCECB on 26-27 January 1972: 'Soobshchenie o soveshchanii rasshirennogo presidiuma VSEKhB' [News of the meeting of the extended presidium of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 2 (1972), p. 64.

1987 the wider AUCECB context will be examined first, as a way to understand the place of publications.

2. AUCECB developments (1972-1987)

The first sub-period was a time of slow development of the Union. As soon as Bichkov became the head of the AUCECB, he continued efforts to consolidate the Union, recognizing that the Union had been weakened after the crises of the previous decade. He continued routine supervisory trips to different regions of the USSR - Ukraine,[330] the Caucasus,[331] the Southern parts of central Russia,[332] and the Baltic Republics[333] - as had been done before.[334] He presided at regular plenums[335] and official meetings of the AUCECB,[336] which became quite numerous after the Congress in 1966.[337] Looking at documents designed for inner-circle use, it is clear that the new AUCECB leaders followed the same management style as in the previous years: centralization, unification, and loyalty to the Soviet government. For example, the first public speech by Bichkov, at the 3-4 June 1972 AUCECB plenum, presented almost the same themes as those in annual reports by Y. Zhidkov in the 1940s. Bichkov praised "the peaceful policy of our government which produced positive changes in

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[330] In March, 1972: A. Bas, 'Poseshchenie general'nym sekretarem VSEKhB A.M.Bichkov ym tserkvei g. Kieva' [Visit to the churches in Kiev by the General Secretary of the AUCECB A.M. Bichkov], *BV,* vol. 3 (1972), p. 74.

[331] In April, 1972: A.M. Bichkov , 'Poseshchenie tserkvei na Kavkaze' [Visit to the churches in the Caucasus], *BV*, vol. 4 (1972), p. 74.

[332] In October, 1972: 'Poseshchenie general'nym sekretarem VSEKhB A.M.Bichkov ym tserkvi g. Sochi' [Visit to the church in Sochi by the General Secretary of the AUCECB A.M. Bichkov], *BV*, vol. 1 (1973), p. 72.

[333] To Latvia in August 1972: A.M. Bichkov , 'Presviterkoie soveschaniie v g. Rige' [Pastoral conference in Riga], *BV*, vol. 6 (1972), p. 68; to Estonia in May 1973: A.M. Bichkov , 'Respublikanskoe soveshchanie presviterov tserkvei Estonii' [All-republic conference of presbyters of the churches in Estonia], *BV*, vol. 4 (1973), p. 73.

[334] During the plenum on 3-4 July 1972, Bichkov reported on 23 trips of the members of the AUCECB to local churches: 'Plenum Vsesoiuznogo Soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [The plenum of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 5 (1972), p. 64.

[335] Usually several meetings were held annually. Plenums were more frequent in 1971-1973. There was a break of several years after the Congress of 1974 (with no plenums until 1977). This break cannot be explained by lack of the need for plenums in these years.

[336] After the series of emergent congresses of the 1960s, the leadership of the Union organized congresses every five years (in line with the CPSU). Congresses took place in 1969, 1974, 1979, and 1985.

[337] The 1966 Congress took place long before the election of Bichkov.

favour of peace and international friendship."[338] He reminded his audience that "believers enjoy full citizen rights in our country. They all are under the protection of both the law and the Constitution."[339] Therefore, "every believer being a citizen must fulfil his or her civil obligations and be obedient to the law about cults."[340] In particular, believers were obliged to prevent "mass funeral processions with spiritual songs and preaching, the participation of children and adolescents in church choirs and orchestras, administration of baptisms in public places without permission from the government."[341] Bichkov also insisted on the crucial importance of the AUCECB superintendents in solving church problems.[342] At the same time, Bichkov expressed satisfaction that "the spiritual life in the majority of the churches of our brotherhood is peaceful and quiet. After industrious work or on Sundays, God's children are meeting to praise the Lord in peace and quietness."[343] Nevertheless, despite the use of similar rhetoric, the situation in Bichkov's time had changed.

During the time of dissent, the system of ruling through superintendents proved its ineffectiveness. Local believers simply did not collaborate with church leaders whom they did not trust. So the AUCECB started to develop an alternative system of leadership that would combine vertical control with gaining the confidence of ordinary church members. An important step in this direction was made through the revision of the AUCECB Statutes during the 1966 Congress.[344] The revised Statute granted local churches partial control over the choice of local superintendents and permitted a democratic election of presbyters. The Union leadership began to talk to local communities about the democratic character of the AUCECB. For example, many plenums and congresses, especially in the 1970s, included an open dialogue with regional representatives.[345] During this period churches belonging to the AUCECB learned to speak of official obedience to the law of a Communist state while at the same time carrying out, at least to a certain extent, their own chosen activities. Their actions

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[338] 'Plenum Vsesoiuznogo Soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [The plenum of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 5 (1972), p. 64.

[339] Ibid.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Ibid.

[343] Ibid.

[344] See 'Ustav VSEKhB' [Statutes of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 6 (1966), p. 50.

[345] For example, the only significant decision that was made during the congresses after 1969 was the approval of the Confession of Faith in 1985. But even this decision was merely formalizing what was already fact, because by that time this theology had already been taught through the Bible Correspondence Courses for almost 20 years (since 1968).

could cross the boundaries of what was allowed, for example in the area of youth work, but this was tolerated by local authorities.[346] Meanwhile the centre in Moscow supplied churches with literature, with legal protection, and, sometimes, with finances.[347] Although the formal structure of the AUCECB had not changed, in reality there were changes, and these secured a situation of steady development.

The hope of progress towards evangelical unity, however, remained unrealised. In the 1970s there were two insurmountable obstacles: the Pentecostals and the CCECB. Although everyone in the AUCECB understood the nature of the obstacles, nevertheless Union leaders continued with efforts aimed at unity. The AUCECB did not advance a step in relations with Pentecostals, however, and continued to stand firmly on the positions of the August 1945 Agreement.[348] This agreement (as noted earlier) was unacceptable to Pentecostals, since it affected the very essence of their doctrine and church life. To make Pentecostals follow ECB rules meant to break with their historic identity. Understanding this, the AUCECB did not, in practice, undertake any serious efforts to reach real spiritual unity with Pentecostals.[349] Most ECB presbyters preferred to have nothing to do with their Pentecostal neighbours even though formally they belonged to the same union.[350]

The situation with *Initsiativniki* was somewhat different. In 1972, when the AUCECB were preparing for another Congress, its leaders received a letter from the CCECB.[351] This letter called on the AUCECB to legalize the illegal union, to help with the release of all their

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[346] In the 1970s an evangelical youth movement developed, in spite of formal prohibition by both the government and church leaders. Usually leaders of youth groups had no positions in church administration. So formally pastors pretended to be unaware of youth activities in their churches, and authorities connived with them. At the same time, it was obvious that leaders of the AUCECB knew about the growth of youth groups in the Union.

[347] For example, the Volgodonsk church borrowed a sum of money from a regional department of the AUCECB which enabled them to build a new building (from my personal knowledge).

[348] See materials of the plenum of the AUCECB in 'Rasshirennii plenum VSEKhB' [The extended plenum of the AUCECB], *BV*, vol. 2 (1977), p. 62.

[349] Usually the contact with Pentecostals consisted merely of invitations to them to propose representatives for membership in the Council (*HECB,* p. 406).

[350] The final report about relations between Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Pentecostals was made during a plenum of the AUCECB in 1975 by P.Shatrov ('O edinstve s christianami very evangelskoi' [About unity with Christians of the Evangelical Faith], *BV*, vol. 1 (1976), p. 64), who courteously characterized such relations as 'friendly'.

[351] A.V. Sinichkin, 'Dialog mezhdu STsEKhB i VSEKhB 1961-1972 gg.' [Dialogue between the AUCECB and CCECB from 1961 to 1972] (in *Put' bogopoznaniia (Theognosis),*10:40-81; 11:82-128; 12:87-127), N.11, p.125.

imprisoned members, and then to organize a joint congress of the AUCECB and CCECB. The AUCECB obviously did not possess the power to satisfy these demands. Such steps could be taken only by the government.[352] So the AUCECB Congress took place in 1974 according to its original schedule. Representatives of the CCECB received an invitation to participate in the Congress but ignored it. There was no further direct contact between AUCECB and CCECB until the fall of the Soviet Union.[353]

In the meantime, the CCECB developed its own life, including publishing activities. In 1971, it established its own underground publishing house *Khristianin* ("Christian"), and operated several illegal printing houses throughout the country. The publishing house became a target for Soviet police hunts and KGB searches.[354] *Khristianin* published a periodical *Vestnik Istinni* (Messenger of Truth), a newspaper *Bratskyi Listok* ("Note for Brothers"), and a bulletin produced by the Council of Prisoners' Relatives.[355] An important event in the life of the CCECB in the 1970s was the arrest in 1974 of its General Secretary, G. Vins, who was sentenced to five years in labour camp.[356] In 1979, Vins was expelled from the USSR.[357] After this expulsion he settled in the USA and organized a Representative office of the CCECB abroad. This organization informed the public in the West about the situation with regard to freedom of religion in the USSR. An example of the literature published by it was a brochure "… and ye visited me" which contained information about imprisoned believers and

[352] According to Sinichkin the AUCECB several times wrote petitions to the Supreme Court in favour of prisoners (Ibid. p. 124). I failed to find concrete evidence of this.

[353] Representatives of the AUCECB continued to send letters to members of the CCECB. But they received no response. Soon the Council of Churches issued a decree that forbade any contacts by their followers with the legal wing of the Baptists, claiming that state registration was sin. In 1984 a group of autonomous churches issued and signed a document under the title 'Brethren Agreement', which was proposed as a basis for reconciliation between the two unions. But it did not achieve this goal.

[354] Despite all efforts, the authorities failed to stop the illegal publishing activity of the CCECB. The police failed to close printing houses which belonged to 'Christian': see T. Nikol'skaya, 'Istoriia dvizheniia baptistov-initsiativnikov' [History of the movement of the Baptists-Initsiativniki] (in *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma*, V.3 (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2004), pp. 63-94, esp. pp. 87-89.

[355] The Council of Prisoners' Relatives (CPR) was established in 1964 after the first arrests of the leaders of the *Inintsianivniki*. The bulletin of CPR published letters from prisoners, appeals to the state, biographical information, etc. (see Sawatsky, pp. 241-242).

[356] This was Vins' second sentence. N. Baturin replaced him after the arrest.

[357] He was exchanged for two Russian spies detained in the USA.

urged Western readers to protest against the religious policy of the Soviet Union.[358] The publishing activity of Vins resulted in Western organizations trying to influence the Soviet government to relieve its pressure on Soviet believers. Contrary to all Western expectations, these protests led to some increases in hostility directed by the Soviet authorities towards Russian believers, who were punished for the activities of their Western defenders.[359] In this situation the role of the AUCECB as a buffer between the Soviet government and western religious organizations became very important. The role of the AUCECB became a topic of debate in various publications.

The widely-read *Christianity Today* was one of the American publications in which news of the situation in the USSR was reported. In a 1975 article "Confronting the Kremlin", the correspondent E.E. Plowman described the sufferings of the two best-known leaders of the CCECB, Vins and Kruchkov.[360] Assessing the role of the AUCECB in the conflict between the CCECB and the state, the author noticed some positive aspects of the role played by the legal Union in alleviating the conditions of *Initiativnikis* in prison.[361] Also he listed such achievements of the AUCECB as increasing the number of church members, and starting educational and publishing projects.[362]A year later, *Christianity Today* carried an article entitled "Better conditions for Soviet Churches".[363] The article reported about negotiations with the Soviet Government concerning clemency for those who were still in prison. The article quoted D.S. Russell, General Secretary of the British Baptist Union and a representative of the European Baptist Federation, who participated in negotiations and claimed that "conditions for Christians in the Soviet Union have improved in the past year."[364]

A significant insight was offered into the conflict between the AUCECB and *Initsiativniki* in *Christianity Today* in 1982 under the title "Religion in the USSR: How much

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[358] *And ye visited me: a prisoner directory of the evangelical Christian baptists in the Soviet Union* (Elkhart, Ind.: International representation for the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches of the Soviet Union, 1984)

[359] Leaders of the CCECB (not the AUCECB) asked Vins to stop his anti-Soviet propaganda because it made their life unbearable and subsequently led to dissent inside the Council of Churches. See Sinichkin, 'Dialog mezhdu STsEKhB i VSEKhB 1961-1972 gg.' [Dialogue between the AUCECB and CCECB from 1961 to 1972], N.11, p.127.

[360] E.E. Plowman, 'Confronting the Kremlin', *Christianity Today*, Feb.28, 1975, pp. 41-42.

[361] Ibid., p. 41.

[362] Ibid., p. 42.

[363] 'Better conditions for Soviet Churches', *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976, pp. 45-46.

[364] Ibid., p. 45.

freedom is enough?"[365] This consisted of articles by Denton Lotz, then General Secretary of the BWA, who defended the position of the AUCECB, and by G. Vins. Baptist bodies such as the BWA and the EBF consistently showed their support for the AUCECB. Lotz, aware of the accusations of the CCECB, accepted that the AECECB was in a very difficult situation compared with churches in Western countries, but argued that the limitations on religious freedom existed in pre-Communist Russia as well.[366] He refused to label AUCECB officers KGB informers. He suggested that one should "distinguish between the elected leadership of the AUCECB and its international department, which is probably more responsive to government requests", and quoted AUCECB General Secretary A. Bichkov that "one cannot be a Baptist and a member of the Communist party".[367] Lotz argued that the legal wing of the Baptist movement in the USSR had achieved significant success. According to statistics quoted by Lotz, the official Union had 25 times as many members in its congregations as the CCECB.[368] Lotz was clearly aware of the partly propagandistic role of the AUCECB in forming a positive image of the Soviet Union, but he called for understanding about this since, in his words, "it had tremendous positive effects", though he added that he was "not free to say what those effects are."[369] Vins, for his part, stressed his unwillingness to work with the ungodly regime in any form,[370] and criticized AUCECB churches for obeying the atheistic policy of limiting the religious training of youth.[371] It is perhaps noteworthy that the article by Vins was put at the end, leaving *Christianity Today* readers with a negative evaluation of the All-Union Council by its best-known opponent.

A year later, *Christianity Today* again reported on the AUCECB in an article by Plowman, "Revival spreads in Soviet churches despite government opposition".[372] The optimistic tone of the article showed general approbation of the policy of the AUCECB. In the opinion of the author, such policy consisted in the use of the international reputation of the Union as a means of pressure on the authorities for the sake of expansion of Evangelical

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[365] 'Religion in the USSR: How much freedom is enough?', *Christianity Today*, Oct. 8, 1982, pp. 46-49.

[366] Ibid., p. 46.

[367] Ibid., p. 47.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Ibid.

[370] Ibid., p. 48.

[371] Ibid., p. 49.

[372] E.E. Plowman, 'Revival spreads in Soviet churches despite government opposition', in *Christianity Today*, Nov. 23, 1984, pp. 34-36.

Christianity in the USSR.[373] The author spoke of the decline of the Council of Churches, describing the difficulties of Reform Baptist emigrants in West Germany.[374] By this time the AUCECB was an active participant in the life of the Baptist World Alliance and the European Baptist Federation.[375] It was also cooperating with the International Bible Society. This collaboration allowed the Society to start several important projects for Soviet Christians.[376] Describing relations between the AUCECB and the European Baptist Federation, Bernard Green mentions the address by A. Bichkov to the seminar-conference of 1979 in which the leader of the Soviet Baptists testified to significant improvement in the social position of the AUCECB.[377] Its policy towards the state seemed to be bearing fruit internally.

On the wider international stage, the AUCECB continued to be a defender of the Communist regime to Christians throughout the world, not only Baptists, and it was rewarded by growing tolerance and even respect from the regime. From 1968 the AUCECB regularly participated in World Council of Churches meetings.[378] Peace-making continued to be one of the international themes of the AUCECB, which participated in pro-Communist international peace-making organizations like the "Christian Peace Conference",[379] as well as in the ecumenical "Conference of European Churches".[380] While in the 1950s and 1960s the AUCECB never had a leadership role in peace-making, in the 1970s it initiated international peace-making seminars that took place in 1979, in 1981, and in 1983.[381] The international activities and also the successful domestic policy made the Union more influential.

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[373] Ibid., p. 35.

[374] Ibid., p. 36.

[375] For more information see *HECB*, pp. 255-262.

[376] Bible translation into the languages of the nations within the USSR and preparing the Bible for the blind were among these projects (*HECB*, p. 262).

[377] Bernard Green, *Crossing the boundaries: a history of the European Baptist Federation* (Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 1997), pp.102-104.

[378] *HECB*, pp. 261-262.

[379] The Christian Peace Conference, the puppet ecumenical organization controlled by the government of the USSR, was founded in Prague in 1958 and united several hundreds of representative throughout the world. Its goal was to promote the interests of the Soviet Union on the international religious stage. The AUCECB was one of the founders of this organization (see *BV*, vol. 3 (1970) pp. 66-68). A detailed history of this organization can be found in W.C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet foreign policy, 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973), pp. 39-56.

[380] This ecumenical organization was founded in 1959. The Russian Orthodox Church had a significant influence within it and thus the Soviet Union government tried to use this organization for its own purposes.

[381] Ibid., pp. 266-267.

3. Developments in *BV* (1972-1987)

Alexander Karev was the chief editor of *BV* from its foundation, and after his death, this position was passed on to the president of the AUCECB, I. Ivanov. Later in 1975 the General Secretary, A. Bichkov, became the formal overseer of the periodical. As chief editors, Ivanov and Bichkov were responsible to the authorities for the political correctness of materials published in the periodical. Unlike Karev, they were not engaged in the routine work of editing the journal but delegated these responsibilities to the executive editor V. Kulikov.[382] The early 1970s saw a formalisation of *BV*. The sections that had appeared in the periodical in 1965 now became fixed in their titles and order. Every issue of *BV* started with an editorial[383] and had four permanent sections. These sections, in order, were the Voice of Christians for the Defence of Peace, the Unity of Christians, Spiritual Articles, and Local Information. The order was changed in the middle of 1978 when the sections on spiritual issues and peace-making were swapped.[384] It seems that this change in order, which gave priority to spiritual articles, was connected with the plenum of 11-12 May 1978,[385] and it certainly symbolized a relative liberalisation of state control of the journal.

Soon after the 1978 plenum, on 9 June 1978, Bichkov organized a meeting of choir conductors and announced the establishment of a music department in the Bible Correspondence Courses and a section devoted to music in *BV*.[386] The new section received the name "Singing and Music" and its place was between the peace-making and the informational sections.[387] In addition to the permanent sections, a historical section appeared in the periodical from time to time (fairly seldom).[388] The interest in wider history that had been a hallmark of Karev's supervision of the journal almost totally disappeared when Kulikov became its actual editor. This can be explained by the fact that after the death of

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[382] In the late 1980s a member of the AUCECB, I. Gnida, was appointed assistant to the chief editor. Nevertheless, even during this period Kulikov continued to play the leading role in editing *BV*.

[383] Almost without exceptions, the editorials contained congratulations concerning certain holidays: 1st issue – New Year; 2nd issue – Easter; 3rd issue – Pentecost; 4th issue – Day of Harvest; 5th issue – Day of Unity; 6th issue – Christmas.

[384] The change of order of the sections could be observed beginning with issue number 4 in 1978.

[385] The change in order started in *BV*, vol. 4 (1978) which was published after the plenum. Only this issue contained a unique section devoted to this plenum.

[386] 'Soobscheniie o sobesedovanii regentov' [Information about consultations with the choir directors], *BV*, vol. 4 (1978), p. 68.

[387] Before 1978 hymn music was included at the very beginning of the journal before the editorial.

[388] This was either under the title 'From the history of Christianity' or 'From the history of the Evangelical Baptist movement in Russia'.

Karev there were obvious endeavours of the editorial board to make the journal more specific, more focused on the Russian evangelical movements in their past and present. That is why it excluded all materials that were not directly connected to the Russian Baptist churches. At the same time, current events were reported in more detail.

After 1971 (when Bichkov was elected as a General Secretary of the AUCECB) Communist propaganda was significantly reduced; indeed such propaganda, in its pure form, did not feature in the structure of *BV*. Articles on peace-making continued, but were clearly separated from devotional material, so that their authors did not mix evangelical ideas with political rhetoric. It became obvious that the two ideological sections, devoted to peace-making and to ecumenical issues, were not central. As a rule, they consisted only of formal reports about certain events, usually without any comments. Often articles in these sections contained no Christian vocabulary at all.[389] The size of these sections was also significantly diminished.[390] Most of the articles in *BV* were concentrated in the two major sections, "Spiritual articles" and "Local Information". Devotional articles were given increasing space in the pages of *BV* and soon they supplanted all other types of articles. The section "Local Information" included all types of official AUCECB information, from reports about plenums and editorials that expressed the official point of view of the AUCECB, to articles on recent history, biographies and obituaries.

The list of articles published in 1979 in *BV* issue 3 may serve as an example of the material being carried in this period:[391]

1. Acts of the Holy Spirit (A. Karev);
2. Birth from above (S. Fadiukhin);
3. Guidance by the Holy Spirit (V. Mescheryakov);
4. True love (Y. Tervits);
5. Exposition of Hebrews (A. Bichkov, continued from previous issues);
6. Exposition of Mark (O. Tärk, continuation);
7. Acts (P. Shatrov, continuation);
8. Thoughts from the Book of Life (V.P.[392], continuation).

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[389] E.g. K.V. Pilipuk, 'Mezhdunarodnyi god zhenschin' [International women's year], *BV*,vol. 6(1975), p.6 .

[390] In the first issue of *BV* in 1961, for example, ideological material occupied almost 70% of its content. In 1981 the ecumenical and peace-making sections together took only 3-5 pages.

[391] Other issues could have been chosen to illustrate the same points.

[392] Vasily Pavlov (1854-1924).

The analysis of this example shows common trends. There were only articles of a certain type. The diversity of materials observed in previous years had by this stage become a thing of the past. Educational and doctrinal materials became less frequent. Spiritual sermons promoting ideas of personal revival constituted up to 90 per cent of all articles in *BV*. By this time interest in recent history, and even any impression of historicity, had disappeared almost completely. The genre of biography, which had been common in previous years, was considered as too "earthly", too limited by historical contingency. So it was eliminated from the list of preferred forms of writing in *BV*.[393]

Although there was a lack of interest in history, *BV* started to publish works by great Russian Baptists of the past. In the previous periods most articles were written specifically for a particular issue. Now approximately one quarter of each issue reproduced classical works of Baptist leaders like Prokhanov, Karev, Kargel, Pavlov and others who wrote in the nineteenth and early twentieth century periods.[394] Papers written by foreign authors were infrequent. In the previous years censoring had restricted the possibility of such publications: the publication in 1958 of a section from the great Baptist preacher, C.H. Spurgeon,[395] was presented as a sample of works of the author, whose biography, included in the previous issue,[396] was published in connection with information about three Russian students who had started their studies at Spurgeon's College, London.[397] Although there was more freedom from the 1970s, *BV* included sermons of preachers like C.H. Spurgeon only occasionally.[398] The aim was to build up an identity within the USSR.

In the 1970s and 1980s the circle of contemporary AUCECB authors who wrote for *BV* became quite narrow. It included such authors as A. Bichkov, V. Kulikov, O. Tärk, A. Mitskevich, Y. Dukhonchenko, V. Kanatush, P. Shatrov, S. Fadiukhin, N. Kolesnikov, and a

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[393] Anti-historicity can be seen in this table of content. All articles in this issue are focused on 'eternal truths'. There is no line in them that reveals the time of their writing.

[394] In the sample issue the works of Karev and Pavlov are included.

[395] C.H. Spurgeon, 'Rabota presvitera i propovednika nad soboi' [Personal training of a pastor and preacher], *BV*, vol. 2 (1958), p. 30.

[396] 'Velikii baptist Charlz Gaddon Spergin' [Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a Great Baptist], *BV*, vol. 1 (1958), p. 43.

[397] I. Orlov, 'Na uchebe v Anglii' [Studies in England], *BV*, vol. 4 (1957), p.70.

[398] M. Karetnikova, from St. Petersburg Christian University, who served as the historian of the ECB, suggests that Russian Baptists were influenced by a collection of books from the library of Pashkov. These books were then passed to Kargel. This collection consists of books of sermons of English Baptists and other evangelicals which were translated into Russian. At the same time, Russian Baptists were closely related to German Baptists.

few others. To be accepted into this elite group of *BV* authors was difficult for those who did not have a well-established position in the hierarchy of the AUCECB. The small circle of authors secured the doctrinal, hermeneutical and stylistic consistency of the journal but, at the same time, led to a certain level of stagnation in its development.

Besides *BV,* the AUCECB had several publications of lesser importance:

- There was the "Presbyter's Handbook",[399] in two volumes, which reproduced articles previously published in *BV*.
- Calendars were published annually beginning from the middle of the 1960s. They included plans of reading the Bible in a year and sometimes several spiritual articles from *BV*.
- "Set of spiritual articles" were published in 1980.[400] This was a short compendium of articles from *BV* divided into the sections: "Spiritual articles", "Unity of believers", "In defence of peace", and "Articles on civic issues".[401] This publication was apparently a predecessor to the "Presbyter's's Handbook" and it was compiled along the same lines.
- There were shorter publications with ideological purposes. For example, in 1979 the AUCECB issued an album "Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR"[402] with parallel texts in English and Russian. The book contains a short outline of the history and customs of the Union and presented a series of graphics depicting "the happy life of Soviet believers".[403] It is noteworthy that Bichkov never mentioned such editions during his reports to the Congresses of the Union.

e. Final years of the AUCECB

During Perestroika, the AUCECB did not differ much from the AUCECB of the period before. The state atheistic struggle against religion was not softened until 1988. Indeed officially it became even harsher in the mid-1980s after the acceptance of the programme "Forming a new type of man", proposed by the general secretary of the CPSU, Yurii

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[399] *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Pastor's Handbook] (v. 1, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1982), *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Pastor's Handbook] (v. 2, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1987).

[400] *Sbornik dukhovnykh statei* [A set of spiritual articles] (Moscow: VSEKhB, 1980).

[401] Ibid., p. 3.

[402] *Evangel'skie khristiane-baptisty v SSSR* [Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR],(Moscow: VSEKhB, 1980) .

[403] For example, here are the titles of some of the photos from this album: "Brother F.M. Mokan with his family during his vacation in the resort of Sochi", "Brother S.K. Ivanchev departing for work on his motorcycle".

Andropov, in 1983.[404] However, in practice state policy towards the churches was more tolerant. When the huge shift in state policy towards religion occurred in 1988 most believers were not prepared for it and could not believe it.[405] 1988 was the year of the millennial anniversary of Christianity in Russia, and Perestroika-orientated leaders of the USSR used this opportunity to organize a patriotic campaign that justified Christian faith as part of Russian traditional values. Although Baptists were far from a traditional Russian form of Christianity, they received the same new freedoms as did the Orthodox Church.[406] Suddenly Baptists gained rights they had not dreamt possible several months before. They were allowed to start new communities, to rent state buildings for worship services, to publish religious literature without limitation, to organize religious schools and to visit industrial enterprises. The AUCECB was perplexed. In 1989 it was rather mechanically continuing its peace-making activity.[407] It published just one book "The history of Evangelical Christian-Baptists in the USSR",[408] since it could not find resources to publish more.[409] The organization of Christian education, despite the new opportunities, remained very poor.[410]

Legal evangelization campaigns in the USSR were organized in 1988 and 1989, but AUCECB statistics showed no marked increase in the numbers of new converts, mainly

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[404] See *Materialy plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS* [Materials of the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU], 14-15 June, 1983 (Moscow: IPL, 1983).

[405] The first issue of the newspaper 'Protestant', published in rotaprint (November, 1988), claimed that the political situation in 1988 was similar to 1960 ('Prognoz pogody' [Forecast], *Protestant*, vol.1(1988), p.4).

[406] Michael Bourdeaux, *Opium of the people; the Christian religion in the U. S. S. R. (*London, Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 172, noted that the common ecumenical and peace-making activities of Baptists and Orthodox Christians during the communist years led to the obliteration (at least formally and for a time) of the previous controversies between the two groups. Thus a visit by Billy Graham to Russia in 1992 was initiated by an official invitation of the Orthodox Patriarch. Also, a result of the 70 years of atheism was that many people did not see clearly the differences between various Christian denominations. In addition, the fall of the Iron Curtain raised the popularity of the West and western lifestyle in the USSR. Baptists were often considered as representatives of the prosperous Western society.

[407] For example, Bichkov participated in a meeting of the Christian Peace Conference (see 'Zasedaniie komiteta po prodolzheniiu rabot' KhMK [Meeting of the Committee for continuing the activities of The Christian Peace Conference], *BV,* vol. 1 (1989), p. 52) which survived while the communist block was falling apart.

[408] The publication of this book was prepared long before.

[409] See Vera Kadaeva, 'Sorok chetvertyi vsesoiuznyi s''ezd evangel'skih khristian-baptistov' [44th All-Union Congress of ECB], *BV,* vol. 2 (1990), p. 34.

[410]Most of the Sunday schools existed independently from the leadership of the churches. There was no coordination of educational processes in the regions of the USSR (*BV,* vol. 2 (1990), p. 52).The AUCECB only started its own seminary in 1993, two months before its own dissolution.

because the number had in fact reached a high level in the preceding years (7,089 acts of baptism in 1985, up to 11,416 in 1989).[411] At the same time, the AUCECB suffered a certain loss in numbers of church members for two reasons. First, Pentecostals organized their own Union in 1989 and, as a result, they left the AUCECB.[412] This departure was accepted by the AUCECB with due understanding. The absorption of the Pentecostals had never worked. Secondly, 1988 was the year when mass emigration of Baptists to Western countries began. This process, which continued in subsequent years, was very negative for the Baptist movement in post-Soviet countries in general.

At the beginning of 1990,[413] the AUCECB organized the 44th All-Union Congress. The organizers of the Congress seemingly did their best to avoid difficult questions being raised during the meeting. At the same time, they opened the way for a gradual dismantling of the previous Union organization, dismissing Bichkov from the position of Union leader.[414] It accepted a new Statute which gave more freedom to local churches.[415] Moreover, the Congress altered certain names: the "All-Union Council" was replaced by "Executive committee of the Union".[416] At the same time, the Congress assessed the work of the AUCECB positively and expressed adherence to its values, supporting evangelical unity, ecumenical contacts, and even patriotic fostering of believers and internationalism. The congress did not propose any programme of further development of the Union other than appeals[417] which were published in the "Address to churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR".[418] All this was quite understandable in the situation. The reformed

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[411] 'Otchetnyi doklad Prezidiuma Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov sorok chetvertomu s"ezdu EKhB' [Final report of the Presidium of the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists to the 44th Congress of ECB] *BV*, vol. 2 (1990), p.50.

[412] Ibid. Dukhonchenko reported about 300 churches (42,000 people) that left the Union in 1989.

[413] The Congress took place in October, 21-24.

[414] The Congress abolished the position of General Secretary itself. After this Congress the president received the first position in the leadership of the Union. G. Komendant became the new chief executive of the Union of ECB. At the same time Bichkov was appointed one of the vice-presidents of the Union ('Otchetnyi doklad Prezidiuma Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov sorok chetvertomu s"ezdu EKhB' [Final report of the Presidium of the All-Union Council of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists to the 44th Congress of ECB] *BV*, vol. 2 (1990), p. 69).

[415] 'Ustav soiuza evangel'skikh khristian – baptistov' [Statute of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 3 (1990), p. 82.

[416] The expression 'all-Union' was eliminated from the name of the Union.

[417] For example, appeals to start Sunday schools, to build new church buildings, etc.

[418] 'Obrashchenie k tserkvam evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR' [Address to the churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR], *BV*, vol. 2 (1990), p. 79.

Union existed till the end of 1993 but it was only a nominal organization. The Union's temporal role during this period consisted in sustaining a certain church order till the time when national unions were able to organize themselves in subsequent years.[419] The deconstruction of the AUCECB was gradual and inconspicuous.[420] The Congress in 1993 was a Congress of the ECB of Russia only. The last leaders of the AUCECB at that time became the heads of national Baptist unions.[421]

New historical circumstances demanded changes in *BV*, but apparently such revisions were an uneasy task for its editorial board. The only innovation in *BV* in 1988 was a new section, "Spiritual poetry", which meant that one poem was included in every issue. In 1989 the section "Spiritual poetry" was merged with the musical section. In place of the poetry section the editors proposed a section "Christian ethics" where they published various articles by an American, John McArthur,[422] on problems faced by Christian families.[423]

After 1990, however, the array of articles was significantly broadened. The journal began to include occasional topics in each issue.[424] The materials in *BV* began to be so diverse that the orientation of the periodical became unclear. The editorial board strove to cover the growing interests of different groups in the Baptist community and as a result lost the specificity of the journal. At the same time, the content of *BV* obviously did not fit the reality of the post-Perestroika period. Indeed, the great majority of articles published after 1990 were written mostly by former ECB leaders long before that time and apparently they

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[419] It was noteworthy that the first Congress of churches of the Russian Federation took place one month before the 44th Congress of the AUCECB (on 12-13 January 1993).

[420] For example, even after the declaration of the fall of the Soviet Union the leaders of the AUECB claimed that their vision of Christian unity would not be affected by this event.

[421] G. Komendant began to lead the Ukrainian Union of the ECB and his vice-president A. Firisyuk became head of the Byelorussian Union.

[422] John Fullerton MacArthur, a radio-preacher and a pastor of the Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California (see Karen Jones, 'John MacArthur: Unleashing God's Truth—One Verse at a Time' (in *Bible Study Magazine* 2 (1), Nov-Dec 2009, pp.10-14). He organized a massive evangelistic campaign in Russia and Ukraine, and his teaching later became very influential among evangelicals in those countries. Articles by MacArthur on Christian families were published in *BV* at the end of *Perestroika*.

[423] There were also two articles written by Russian authors: a report about the conference for Christian families (V.Kadayeva, 'Razdelat' zaboty vmeste' [Sharing cares together], *BV*, vol. 3 (1989), p. 62), and an article written by V. Popov "Christian attitude to nature" ('Otnosheniye khristianina k prirode' [Christian attitude to nature], *BV*, vol. 3 (1989), p. 63). These were written in the style of articles from the series "Fostering our believers in their daily life" of the 1940s.

[424] For example, the section 'Pastoral care' appeared only in one issue, *BV*, vol. 5 (1990), pp. 78-84.

were not of interest to Baptist readers of the early 1990s.[425] Even worse, the periodical ceased its correspondence with local communities and did not sustain the news section. Thus, it lost its significance as a source of information on the ongoing history of ECB.

The Russian Union of ECB continued to publish *BV* every two months till the end of 1993. After 1993, *Bratsky Vestnik* became an annual publication due to a private initiative of V. Kulikov under the umbrella of an interdenominational Bible school, the Moscow Seminary of Evangelical Christians, supported by Korean Presbyterians.[426] Although the periodical preserved its name and International Standard Serial Number, it lost its denominational standing and became a private publication filled with reprints, articles written by Kulikov himself and by his students. With the break-up of the USSR and the AUCECB its role had come to an end.

f. Conclusion

In spite of all the upheavals of the Soviet years, the history of the AUCECB during the Soviet period showed a high degree of continuity. There was a standard set of problems and circumstances which leaders of the AUCECB addressed, from the foundation of the Union to its collapse. The history of the ECB in the USSR is a story of the existence of evangelical believers in the hostile environment of an atheistic state which tried to assert total control over them. This defined much of the character of the activities of the AUCECB. Thus, in domestic life the Communist influence on the AUCECB was seen in building hierarchical administrative structures which promoted the state's religious policy. The efforts to create a positive image of the Soviet Union in the international realm through participation in peace-making and ecumenical events were intended to secure a position for believers.

The success or the failure of the AUCECB in improving the position of evangelicals in Soviet society depended significantly on how much tolerance was accorded by the state. Thus in the periods of relative freedom during the early post-war years and during Perestroika, the Union prospered. During Stalin's last years and during Khrushchev's anti-religious campaign it existed on the edge of survival. In the 1970s and early 1980s, there was stability, but also a measure of stagnation. Yet through all these different periods the AUCECB had a vision of their Christian duties and values and leaders strove to achieve

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[425] For example, in issue 5, 1993, the article by V. Popov about a pioneer of the Baptist movement in Russia V. Pavlov ('Vasiliy Gurievich Pavlov', *BV*, vol. 5 (1993), p. 35) was the only article written especially for *BV*.

[426] After finishing his career in the AUCECB, Kulikov became a teacher and a member of the board of trustees of this seminary, which allowed him to raise funds for the continuing publication of *BV*.

maximal results in the embodiment of evangelical ideals. I would argue that the position of ECB leaders can be characterized as a constant search for compromises which allowed their communities to function, even though such compromises were not always seen as authentically evangelical by others. It was this which caused the split in the Union in the early 1960s.

The balancing act between state and church interests was reflected in the publications of the AUCECB. On the one hand, the content of *BV* and other publications contained a considerable amount of ideology imposed by the state. On the other hand, great efforts were made by the editorial board of the ECB to deliver spiritual materials to the readers. An analysis of *BV*, books and booklets of the ECB shows a very important tendency, which will be examined in detail later in this thesis. When there was greater freedom, spiritual articles dominated. The content of the spiritual writings did not depend on historical circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable. New leadership took over within the AUCECB in the 1970s, but *BV* still carried articles written in the end of 1940s as if they were designed directly for the current readers. To some extent, the static character of *BV* resembles the static nature of the Communist ideology and the life in the USSR. In the final years this static approach was harmful for the periodical because it caused the content to appear irrelevant to new readers and their interests. However, for many evangelical believers during the Communist decades *BV* offered ECB believers inner spiritual freedom even amid forced submission to ungodly powers. The next chapter probes more deeply the way in which the use of the Bible featured in that process.

Chapter 4

Use of the Bible in ECB communities

a. Introduction

In the two previous chapters in this part of the thesis, the publications of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists have been explored and analyzed from the historical perspective. But a complete analysis of this group as an interpretative community is impossible without taking into account certain specific features of its view of the scriptures and the ways in which exposition of the Bible took place. So the present chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the general hermeneutic background that shaped the ECB and contributed to the approaches in publications which will be examined in more detail later.

The Bible had supreme authority for the ECB and it was to a large extent the interpretation of biblical texts that formed the identity of their community. It is impossible to

overestimate the importance of biblical exposition and application for the doctrines and practices of the AUCECB. For these evangelical believers, the Bible defined every aspect of their life. Any event, any piece of information, any inclination had to be approached from the perceived position of the Bible. Even the very idea that Christians should read and interpret the Bible was explained as a command of the Bible itself.[1] This is why the quest for "sound biblical teaching"[2] constituted the main task of any research project of ECB "scholars".[3] This was expressed especially in writings in *BV*.

b. ECB beliefs: scripture and principles of interpretation

The first point of reference for the study of the nature of biblical hermeneutics within the ECB is an exploration of how they themselves understood it. Some of the insights of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists concerning the essence of the scriptures and the nature of biblical interpretation are to be found in those few articles of *Bratsky Vestnik* which were devoted to the subject of the Bible. 1946 was the 70th anniversary of the translation of the Bible into the Russian language. This anniversary produced a series of publications on biblical questions. The most significant series on the Bible in this period was by member of Presidium of the AUCECB and its treasurer, Ivan Motorin. The first article in the series was "The Bible is the word of God". The article (or rather the sermon) presents the general notions about the Bible widely accepted among evangelicals (e.g. that the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments is the revelation of God about Christ). The article uses flowery metaphors, with more than half of the article devoted to poetical comparisons of the Bible to a lamp, spiritual water, the bread of life and seed. [4]

The article had a sequel in 1947 under the title "How to study the Bible".[5] In the first part of this piece Motorin explains what he sees as incorrect ways of interpreting scripture. In his opinion, wrong interpretations appear when interpreters rely on "human traditions" (by which he seems to mean "rationalist approach") instead of following the genuine word of God.[6] The scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament alongside undefined "modernist

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[1] A.Karev, A.Mitskevich, V.Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis] (Moscow: VSEKhB), p.4.

[2] This expression, in different forms, can be found on the pages of *BV* more than 100 times. There was one article by Arthur Mitskevich 'Follow the pattern of the sound teaching' (based on 1Tim.1:13) that specifically considered the question what the sound teaching is.

[3] The authors of AUCECB publications never called themselves scholars or theologians, though they expressed respect for those who could call themselves by these names.

[4] Ibid., p.4.

[5] I. Motorin, 'Kak izuchat' bibliiu' [How to study the Bible], *BV*, vol. 1 (1947), p. 56.

[6] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

theologians", he argues, serve as sad examples of an improper use of the Bible.[7] Although Motorin claimed to propose "right methods of Bible study" his proposals are too general to be considered a hermeneutical system of any kind, even set out in layman's form. The single hermeneutical principle that he mentions casually is that "the Bible interprets itself" and his suggested method is "to read the Bible from the beginning to the end".[8] Other suggestions include "to study biblical topics",[9] "to use reference books" (he does not explain which),[10] and "to share biblical ideas with others".[11] The ultimate authority in the interpretation of the scriptures belongs to the "universal church", but there is little awareness of the universal church beyond the AUCECB, in the concrete historical setting about which he is writing. Motorin stresses that it is crucial for individuals to have a good Christian education if they want to interpret the scriptures, but in his mind, Christian education has nothing in common with academic theology – which he terms "modernist theology" - but rather consists in collective studies of the Bible produced by Baptist Union leaders. [12]

Surprisingly, given the importance of the Bible for Russian Baptists, articles directly expounding the nature of the Bible are comparatively rare in *BV*, and Motorin's articles are the most prominent works on the topic published in the periodical. As an explanation of AUCECB views of the Bible they were surpassed only by handbooks of the Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC) on Exegesis and Preaching, which allow some systematization of the main points of AUCECB's interpretation of doctrine. Using Motorin's material and the BCC material, the approach to the Bible may be presented in terms of three major principles: 1. The clarity of the Bible; 2. The historicity of the Bible; 3. The holiness of the Bible.

1. The clarity of the Bible

Throughout the AUCECB publications there is an assumption that the Bible is crystal clear in its meaning and that interpretation of the Bible is a basic process accessible to everyone. Yet an examination of AUCECB publications reveals a striking lack of interest in finding any consistent hermeneutical methodology. It seems especially strange in the situation where the

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 58.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 59.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Seemingly it was the common way of 'Christian education' in the 1920s and 1930. See testimonies of those who participated in it: 'Zapis' besedy A. Konoplika i I.Kargel'a' [Record of a private conversation between A. Konoplik and I. Kargel], (typed copy in Archive of the RUECB}, p.12.

Bible was considered the foundation stone of all ECB doctrines. But actually the key to this paradox is apparent. The Baptists of the Soviet period simply did not think that Bible interpretation could possibly evoke any problem. In their minds, biblical teaching was straightforward, unambiguous, and crystal clear to any reader of the Good Book.

Arthur Mitskevich, in the very first chapter of *Ekzegetika*, writes: "The Bible should be understood as it was written, that is all words should be understood in their everyday meanings, simply and unpretentiously. No doubt, God expressed in his word exactly what he wanted to say."[13] The simplicity of the Bible is crucial for the identity of the ECB, according to Mitskevich, who says: "When some copies of the Slavic Bible appeared in Russia they were read and interpreted in its literal sense… This led to the appearance of Spiritual Christians [that is the evangelical revival – A. P.] in Russia."[14] Misinterpretation of the Bible can appear only as a result of insufficient efforts of the interpreter or because of her/his intentional perversion of the Scriptures.[15]

The self-sufficiency of the Bible was manifested in the evangelical world with the popular principle "the Bible is interpreted by the Bible".[16] According to this principle, interpreters of the Bible need not use any other sources to explain the historical background and can work only with the Bible itself. "The best guide for an interpreter is hidden in the Scripture itself"[17] was the favourite motto of Baptist preachers in the USSR. This approach is by no means unusual, but it was especially true for believers in the Soviet Union because they simply did not have any other auxiliary tools for understanding the Bible, except the Bible itself. It is no surprise that a Concordance (*Symphonia*) was considered the most useful instrument in preparing sermons, a task which was considered the main goal of biblical interpretation.

The principle of the self-sufficiency of the Bible can, however imply the existence of a certain "canon inside the canon" of basic "biblical truths". Such a canon can be observed, for instance in the theological activity of the AUCECB's spokesmen, where it consisted of collecting formative texts and presenting them as "the teaching of the Bible." In fact, the majority of the doctrinal texts of the ECB were compendia of formative passages from the

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[13] Karev, Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p.5.

[14] Ibid.

[15] *Kratkiy kurs gomiletiki* [Short course on homiletics] (Moscow: VSEKhB), pp. 142-145.

[16] This principle has already been seen in the article of Motorin considered above. The authors of the main handbook on hermeneutics wrote: 'We rejoice because for any passage of the Bible there are several keys to interpretation inside the Scriptures', Karev, Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p.6

[17] Ibid., p. 12

Bible. Thus, the most important document setting out ECB doctrine (the 1985 AUCECB statement of faith, to be considered in the chapter that follows) presented a series of statements supported by verses from the Bible. The biblical passages that supported the "biblical truths" were proposed without any comment or explanation. Obviously it was assumed that these passages were to be understood literally and that readers would encounter no problems with their meaning. Actually the Doctrine of the ECB which followed the tradition of Russian evangelical confessions was nothing else but the presentation of the accepted "Baptist" canon which had to serve as a key for the interpretation of the whole Bible.[18]

But it was not the basic texts of the Bible which made AUCECB leaders and the teachers of the Bible Correspondence Courses anxious. The most difficult task for interpreters, in the opinion of the ECB, consisted in dealing with so-called "spiritual interpretation".[19] Mitskevich claims: "people, due to the limits of their human nature, usually master only one direction in biblical interpretation [either literal or "spiritual" –A.P.]. This limitation leads to a one-sided, biased understanding… But we need to strive to master both methods. Reading the Bible we need to interpret it, first, in its literal sense revealing deep truths. Then we need to interpret it from a spiritual point of view which also is blessed."[20]

Mitskevich's words need some clarification. He does not imply that every verse in the Scriptures has a double meaning. There are a number of basic texts, like John 3:16, which in their literal meaning are so "spiritual" that they do not need any special spiritual interpretation. Mitskevich himself admits this. At the same time, a great number of texts do not immediately convey a spiritual meaning. Interpreters had two options in dealing with secondary texts. They might leave such without any explanation and application. As we can see, many ECB interpreters chose this option. The second possibility consisted of finding the "spiritual meaning" for the secondary texts. When choosing the second option, interpreters made the texts play a certain role in the spiritual formation of believers. Mitskevich wanted his students to maintain respect for the literal meaning of biblical texts. Such a position secured a certain degree of stability in Bible interpretation. At the same time, Mitskevich proposed that students look for how any text can be applied for the edification of their local communities. This opened the door to creativity in inventing a "spiritual meaning".

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[18] See chapter 5 of this thesis.

[19] It is interesting that the first assignment in the Exegesis class was to find the spiritual meaning of the words 'water' in John.3:15 and 'fire' in Luke12:49 (Karev, Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p.7).

[20] Ibid., p. 9.

In the ECB the doctrine of double meaning in biblical texts left very unclear the question of which interpretation should be considered as literal and which implied a spiritual meaning. The explanations for difficulties produced by the conception of "spiritual interpretation" were very vague. For example, interpretation of figures of speech, say, in the parables of Jesus was called literal.[21] Apparently, any interpretation that was self-evident and unambiguous enough was considered as literal by ECB. All other interpretations were called spiritual. In the textbooks of the Bible Correspondence Courses in the same context "spiritual" could mean "metaphorical",[22] "allegorical",[23] or "prototypical".[24]

Later chapters of *Exegetika*, which were added by Vladimir Popov, who taught Exegesis at BCC in the 1980s, propose several methods for finding "spiritual" meanings. One of these methods is the "method of parallelism". Popov had obviously heard something about parallelism in Hebrew poetry so he borrowed this "theological" term. But his understanding of parallelism is non-traditional. According to him, parallelism consists in finding similarities between different passages of the Bible in order to draw out certain analogies. For example, he explains that when Jesus told his disciples to "rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (in Luke 10:20) the word "heaven" here should be understood "spiritually": not as "sky" but as the "abode of the spirits", "the heavenly kingdom".[25] His argument is that in the parallel passage in Matt.8:11 Jesus talks about his disciples who "will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." Actually, Popov's whole mode of thought seems to be quite odd, starting from the idea that someone could possibly imagine that Jesus in Luke10:28 had in mind that the names of his disciples would be literally engraved on the sky. In the same textbook Popov propagates the "method of miniatures", which implies that certain biblical narratives serve as "prototypical miniatures" of biblical truths. For example, the history of Enoch is presented as a prototype of the truth about the resurrection in 1 Thes.4:13-18.[26]

The techniques described in this textbook cannot be found anywhere else in ECB literature and are in fact unique to this book. At the same time, they may be considered as interesting examples of how ECB interpreters tried to ponder the notion of spiritual interpretation and to invent a rational theory for it. But it was impossible *a priori* because the

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[21] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[22] Ibid. pp. 6-7.

[23] Ibid. p. 8.

[24] Ibid., p. 9.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

very idea of spiritual interpretation implied that the source of hermeneutics lay not in human reasoning but in a mystical conversation of extraordinary spiritual persons - "the saints" - with God himself. Indeed, spiritual interpretations depend to a great extent on the personal involvement of believers (first of all, of ministers - *sluzhiteli*) with the world of the holy community and also on their ability to communicate spiritual reality. Sometimes the irrational impulses of the holy interpreters led them into thickets of extravagant fantasies (as in the case with *Walterovtsy*[27]) and that constituted a real problem for leaders of the AUCECB whose obligation was in part to watch that the sheep of their flock did not wander too far from common sense.

2. The historicity of the Bible

In speaking about the concept of historicity of the Bible as understood by the ECB, the specific nature of this concept needs exploration. The question of divine inspiration of the Bible was not elaborated upon in the ECB. The Doctrine of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, accepted at the 43rd Congress in 1985, included not a word on this issue. It seems that the position of the ECB was close to fundamentalism, in that there was a strong tendency to believe that the Biblical text was inerrant.[28] At the same time, Soviet Baptists believed that the inspiration took place in concrete historical circumstances and, hence, knowledge of historical facts contributed to an understanding of the Holy Scriptures. A typical explanation of the nature of biblical inspiration is given in one article, "The Significance of the Bible in the Christian life",[29] by Constantine Somov, the author of the BCC textbook on history and the main theologian of the AUCECB from the later period of Alexander Karev's presidency. In the article Somov affirms: "We believers look at the Bible as a book inspired by God, that is, as a book authored by God. People (prophets) who wrote the Bible were merely instruments in God's hands. They expounded thoughts suggested to them by the Holy Spirit who is God himself."[30] The question might be to what extent the "prophets" had freedom in setting forth the "thoughts of God". Somov answers this question as follows: "The Prophets who wrote the Bible presented not their own thoughts but the thoughts of God. This is the divine aspect of the Bible. But they presented the thoughts suggested to them by the Holy

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[27] See Chapter 9 of this thesis.

[28] Cf. George M. Marsden, *Understanding fundamentalism and evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), pp. 115-121.

[29] K.V. Somov, 'Znacheniie Biblii v zhizni khristianina' [The role of the Bible in the Christian life], *BV*, vol. 1 (1962), p. 41.

[30] Ibid., p. 42.

Spirit in the language of their time, using sometimes primitive concepts and the common vocabulary of their time. This is the human aspect of the Bible".[31]

An acknowledgement of a "human aspect" did not mean that ECB admitted the possibility of errors in the Bible. It meant simply the recognition of differences in historical illustrations between biblical times and modernity. Somov demonstrates this concept when he illustrates the primitiveness of biblical authors through an interpretation of Isa. 2:4. According to Somov, when the prophet wrote that "they will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks" instead of "they will reconstruct their tanks and missiles into tractors and harvesters"[32] the author, Isaiah, used terms which fitted the life experiences of people in biblical days but not those of modern Russia. But "the divine aspect here is the thought inspired by the Holy Spirit to the prophet Isaiah that there will be such a happy time in the history of humanity when there will be no wars, when all people will become brothers, they will destroy all kinds of weapons and will not do military training but they will occupy themselves exclusively with creative labour."[33] Somov (like others authors of *BV*), in acknowledging the human side of the Bible, recognised the challenge of dialogue with atheists who criticized the Bible for losing its significance in the period of the great technical and social achievements of Communism.[34]

The ECB accepted that the Bible, although inspired, was somehow ill adapted to the needs of Soviet believers because it did not communicate in the language of technical and scientific progress. At the same time, they believed in the fundamental constancy of the mental, psychic, ethical, and even cultural constitution of human beings throughout all of history, as well as believing strongly in the absoluteness of moral and spiritual values, independent of historical and geographical circumstances. Their ultimately static perception of the universe helped to avoid any difficulties connected with admitting that the interpretation of the Bible demanded some historical knowledge. In common opinion, historical details might contribute to a better understanding of the Bible or might be used for illustrations in a sermon but, of course, a rigorous historical analysis was in no way needed for successful interpretation of the Bible because there had been no cardinal changes in the world since biblical times. Herbert Schneidau noticed that before Levi-Bruhl "Western man

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] For example, it was the main method of Stalin's leader of atheistic propaganda Emelyan Yaroslavsky in his famous propagandistic book, *Bibliia dlja verujushchikh i neverujushchikh* [The Bible for believers and unbelievers] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1959).

lazily and egocentrically ascribed his own ways of thought to ancients and primitives."[35] But the Russian evangelicals did not know Levi-Bruhl. Indeed Russian experience could emphasise continuity rather than change. In spite of all upheavals of the twentieth century, in Russia real changes occurred very slowly and imperceptibly. After all, ploughshares and pruning hooks were still in use in the beginning of the 1900s when Somov was a high-school student.

The same rather static attitude can be observed in the understanding of biblical inspiration as applied to the Synodal translation of the Bible, the translation that was in use by the AUCECB and in all Russian-speaking churches of the Union. The ECB did not divinize "their" translation of the Scriptures. At the same time, they postulated that the Synodal Version was virtually equivalent to the "original text of the Bible", that is to the versions in the original languages, Greek and Hebrew. For example, in the jubilee article in 1976 by Alexei Bichkov and Sergei Fadiukhin[36], timed for the centennial anniversary of the translation of the Bible into Russian, the Synodal Version was called "the great possession of believers".[37] The authors did not deny that "any translation of ancient writings is a massive and difficult task for translators".[38] But they affirmed that "concerning the exactness of deliverance of the Sacred Original, the Russian Synodal Version of the Bible even today is one of the best translations in the world."[39] They valued this translation so highly that they even claimed that the "Russian language was sanctified through the Synodal Version of the Bible".[40]

It is clear that their assessment of the Synodal Version was simply a confirmation of popular opinion. It had nothing to do with a rigorous analysis of the quality of the translation. This is especially obvious in the light of the criticism of what was an "ideologically wrong" translation edited by Bishop Kassian[41] and issued in 1970 in Brussels; ideologically wrong

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[35] H.N. Schneidau, *Sacred discontent: the Bible and Western tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), p. 57.

[36] A.M. Bichkov, S.Fadiukhin, 'Istoriia perevoda Biblii na russkii iazyk' [History of the translation of the Bible into Russian], *BV*, vol. 3 (1976), p. 61.

[37] Ibid., p. 61.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid. p. 65.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Bishop Kassian (Sergey Bezobrazov) was exiled from Russia in 1922. After World War II he was a professor of New Testament in the St.Sergey Theological Institute in Paris. He translated some Gospels in the 1930s. In 1950-1960 Kassian supervised a group of translators who prepared a new translation of the New Testament into Russian: A.Niv'er, *Pravoslavnye sviashchennosluzhiteli, bogoslovy i tserkovnye deiateli russkoi*

because it was produced by emigrants. It is remarkable that Karev and Fadiukhin claimed that the Synodal version, with its archaic vocabulary,[42] doubtful textual basis,[43] and obvious ideological biases,[44] "can easily compete with the best modern translations into the languages of Western Europe."[45] It is very clear that in spite of all declarations about the high place given to the Bible, the leaders of the AUCECB had no idea about - and did not want to imagine - the challenge of a serious engagement with hermeneutics in reading the Bible. For them, the Synodal Version was the trustworthy word of God whose sacral authority could not be discussed critically.

The ECB approach to the Bible also held that its content had historical character. The authors of the textbook on exegesis claimed that "the Bible consists of the description of a range of facts about the past and the future".[46] For the ECB the Bible was to be read as an historical narrative. But, of course, their concept of historical narrative had nothing to do with "historicised prose fiction" proposed by Robert Alter.[47] The fundamental difference consisted in the deep ECB conviction that the biblical narrative was literal and exact truth. It might be close to "realistic narrative" by Hans Frei[48] but even Frei's concept does not imply such strength of personal involvement that could be observed in the system of beliefs confessed by ECB. In the article "What the Bible says",[49] A. Karev stresses: "The Holy Spirit not only took care of the content of the Bible but also ensured that this content was truth; and not just **a** truth but **the** edifying truth needed for salvation as well as for the sanctification of a

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emigratsii v Zapadnoi i Tsentral'noi Evrope. 1920—1995 [Orthodox priests, theologians and church leaders of Russian emigration in Western and Central Europe] (Moscow-Parizh: 2007), pp. 250-252.

[42] The language of the Synodal Version was never a spoken language. It was full of Slavonic archaisms and artificially built grammatical forms - as a result of merging archaic and contemporary elements.

[43] The Synodal Version was strongly affected by various ancient and modern translations of the Bible. It used the majority text of the Masoretic version for the translation of the Old Testament and the *textus receptus* for the New Testament. But even these doubtful versions were not strictly followed. Many textual deviations of the Synodal Version can hardly be explained.

[44] The translators of the Synodal Version did not hesitate to change the meaning of any passage if it seemed contradictory. For instance, they eliminated all textual discrepancies when the New Testament quotes the Old Testament. See A.V. Popov, 'A Literary Approach to Assessment of Style in Translation of biblical Narrative.Case-study: Russian Translations of Ruth' (MTh., diss., IBTS, the University of Wales, Prague: 2003), pp. 25-28.

[45] A.V.K. (Karev, A.V.), 'Chto govorit bibliia' [What the Bible says], *BV*, vol. 3 (1976), p. 61.

[46] Karev, Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p. 5.

[47] *Art of biblical narrative* (Grand Rapids: Basic books, 1981), p. 24.

[48] *The eclipse of biblical narrative* (Yale:Yale University Press, 1974).

[49] A.V.K. (A.V. Karev), 'Chto govorit bibliia' [What the Bible says], *BV*, vol. 3 (1976), p. 24.

person."[50] In other words, the Bible might be defined as an historical narrative remarkable for its two characteristics: it is ultimately trustworthy and it is ultimately formative for personal spirituality. What we have here is almost a literal repetition of Alexei Losev's definition of myth, which will be considered later in this work.[51] The leaders of the ECB proposed a mode of reception of the Bible which can be characterized as mythological. This conclusion makes reasonable the statement that reading the Bible and spirituality were closely interrelated in the ECB communities.

3. The spirituality of interpreters

It is crucial for an understanding of the ECB to realise that reading and interpreting the Bible was not simply an intellectual process. There were reprints of materials in use which had historical and geographical details of the biblical background. But for Soviet evangelicals, the rationality that might occasionally be applied during Bible analysis did not transgress the framework of their mythological system. The holiness and spiritual blamelessness of the interpreters were really matters at the heart of the process of interpretation. The authors of the textbook on biblical exegesis reveal the secret of hermeneutical success: "An interpreter must be God's child. Only such an interpreter can possess the gifts that secure true interpretation."[52] Accordingly, misinterpretation might be explained as being the result of spiritual immaturity.[53] In practice, the demand of spirituality and holiness in the interpreters meant conformity of their interpretation to ideals, norms, and standards accepted among the "holy people".

The beliefs of the ECB concerning the Bible defined the methodology of Bible studies. The principles of simplicity and holiness implied that spiritual (not intellectual) development was the key to a correct understanding of sound biblical teaching. As a result, these evangelical believers treated education in general and Christian education in particular with great suspicion because, in their opinion, it was likely to be an attempt at forgery – an attempt to forge genuine spirituality. For them true spirituality could be reached only through personal holiness, which could be achieved through deeper fellowship with Christ.

The principle of historicity, noted above, made believers merge biblical stories and their personal histories. They simply did not notice boundaries between the content of the

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Alexei Losev is a Russian famous philosopher who elaborated the theory of mythological acceptance of the world. His ideas are considered in chapter 9 of this thesis.

[52] Karev , Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p.10.

[53] Ibid.

Bible and their own biographies.[54] Lack of boundaries was demonstrated very remarkably in the circular letters of the *Initsiativniki* during the beginning of their Dissent from the AUCECB in the 1960s. These letters completely imitated the style of the Synodal Version and involved biblical personages as actors in contemporary history.[55] Samples of such style can be found even in official documents of the CCECB. For example, an "Appeal of the All-Union Conference of ECB Prisoners' Relatives in the USSR" made the following appeal, which moves seamlessly from the sufferings of the apostles to contemporary sufferings:

> To the whole ECB, saints and faithful in Jesus Christ: happiness and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
> Beloved Brothers and Sisters, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians wrote: '… my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace' and 'the things that happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel' (Phil. 1:12-13). In happened to St.Paul in the first century, but today it is happening to our relatives and ourselves, although it is now the twentieth century. …St. Paul requested Timothy, the servant of the Church of Christ: 'Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner' (IITim.1:8). 'Remember my bonds', he asked the church in his Epistle to the Colossians (4:18). At this time, your own brothers and sisters beg of you: 'Be not ashamed of us, remember our bonds'. We thank God for you, that because you serve him, we, though persecuted by the world, are not left alone; through you God satisfies your needs according to his word. And we ask you that in your prayers to God you should always remember your brother and sisters in prison.[56]

It is unhelpful to write about the history of Russian hermeneutics without the clear determining of the situation in which the biblical interpretation took place. Such a mistake can be observed in the book by A. Negrov, *Biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church*.[57] The author tried to generalize principles of biblical interpretation in the ROC for all periods of its existence and for all circumstances of interpretation. For example, he took

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[54] Russian sects (including mystical groups who did not break with the Orthodoxy) of the pre-evangelical period had a special genre of 'holy letters'. These holy letters were writings written as a divine revelation. People treated them with a great respect and used them even as mascots. Holy letters were circulated even among atheists in the Soviet Union: see A.A. Panchenko, *Khristovschina i skopchstvo: fol'klior i traditsionnaia kultura russkikh misticheskikh sekt* [Khristovschina and skopchstvo: folklore and traditional culture of the Russian mystical sects] (Moskva: OGI, 2002), pp.341-353. The informal letters produced by ECB anonymous authors apparently continued that tradition.

[55] Like 'Pis'mo Tertsiia' [Letter of Tertius] (in Archive of the RUECB). The author of this letter pretends to be a scribe of the Apostle Paul and imitates the style and content of the New Testament.

[56] Quoted from M. Bourdeaux, *Religious ferment in Russia: Protestant opposition to Soviet religious policy* (London: MacMillan, 1968), p.83-84.

[57] A.I. Negrov,, *Biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church: a historical and hermeneutical perspective* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008)

doctrinal books written by authors of the nineteenth century,[58] under the influence of Catholic catechetical tradition, [59] and claimed that principles deduced from that literature are true for the Orthodox Church in all periods. Such an approach is basically flawed. The results of Negrov's analysis are too general and imprecise. For example, the hermeneutical principle of patristic authority[60] is unreliable because patristic traditions in Orthodoxy were too diverse even in ancient times, to allow the identification of any particular mode of interpretation.[61] Also there have been many Orthodox authors writing on biblical hermeneutics (for example, Alexander Men')[62] whose dependence on the Church Fathers was minimal.

This example demonstrates that it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the situation and purposes of biblical hermeneutics in every particular group. Fortunately, in the case of the ECB this is not hard to do. The period of that interpretative community was very limited and the situation within which the interpretations took place was very clear. The context was preaching.

c. Biblical interpretation in preaching

Biblical interpretation and preaching were two inseparable processes for the ECB in the USSR. This explains why hermeneutical principles were taught in the BCC course on homiletics,[63] while the course work for exegesis consisted of a series of sermons.[64] When a pastor meditated on a Scripture passage, he pondered over his potential future sermons which would affect the life of his congregation.

But preaching was not limited merely to public speech from the pulpit by an authorized minister: the same form was reproduced constantly in every area of life. For example, fathers preached to their offspring at morning-prayer family meetings. Young men

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[58] E.g. M. Nikolskiy, *Nasha bibleiskaia nauka* [Our Christian science] (PO, 1875); A. Loginov, *Dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie* [Dogmatic theology] (St. Petersburg, 1892).

[59] Negrov, *Biblical interpretation in the Russian Orthodox Church*, pp. 278-297.

[60] Ibid., pp. 279-280.

[61] See, for example, a short sketch of history of hermeneutics of the early Christian Church in G. Bray, *Biblical interpretation: past and present* (Leicester, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), pp. 77-129.

[62] A. Men', *Isagogika* (Moscow:: Fond imeni Aleksandra Menia, 1992). In this book Men' propagated the historical approach based on the *Formgeschichte* school.

[63] For example, the Short Course on Homiletics contains a whole chapter on biblical zoology and botany: *Kratkiy kurs gomiletiki* [Short course on homiletics] (Moscow: VSEKhB), pp. 181-208.

[64] Initially the corpus of the handbook on exegesis consisted of a series of sermons on John and James by Karev.

and women preached to each other at birthday parties.[65] Even the process of pastoral counselling was considered as a private preaching of counsellors to their disciples. While in the majority of local churches preaching in public was a privilege restricted to male believers, female church members could easily find a way to demonstrate their sermonic skills. Presenting a sermon as a personal testimony was enough to open the pulpit to women. Since women formed a substantial part of each Baptist congregation in the Soviet Union, female interpreters of the Bible often played an important role in local churches and some, notably Vera Scheglova, wrote a number of articles in *BV*.[66]

Despite the diverse ways in which preaching could take place, there is no doubt that official preaching from the pulpit in the church had primary significance. It is crucial, therefore, to focus on the sermon as a hermeneutical event in a worship service. As yet there has been no published work on the genre of a Baptist sermon in the USSR. It is not that researchers have lacked an interest in this subject but the subject itself is difficult and undefined. It is very hard to determine what the standards and norms of good preaching in ECB were. Somov states in 1964: "There were many cases when I was asked what I thought about this or that aspect in a sermon which I had heard. Even though I had been in the congregation and had heard the sermon, it was difficult to answer the question. It was not that I was not attentive while listening to their sermons. Simply the preachers talked so incoherently that it was hard to recall their topics."[67] In spite of complaints about the diversity and inconsistency in sermons by ECB preachers, Somov does not propose any reasonable alternative to such a situation. Preaching was considered primarily as a gift of the Holy Spirit and, as such, it could be a matter of personal intuition and of revelation received by a particular individual.

In the same article Somov assaults the idea of systematic biblical education, arguing that "people with doctoral and masters degrees in theology" could not thereby attain the blessing of those "poor in the spirit".[68] We need to keep in mind this attitude to intellectual development of ministers among ECB in order not to take too seriously some of the material in the handbooks of the BCC. The handbook on preaching had valuable material - to a great

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[65] See D.V. Benson, *Miracle in Moscow* (Glendale, Calif.: G/L Regal Books, 1975), pp. 207-221.

[66] Vera Shcheglova, an officer of the AUCECB, published more than 20 articles, which were sermons, in *BV*, from 1945 to 1960.

[67] K. Somov, ' O propovedi i propovednikak' [On preaching and preachers], *BV*, vol. 2(1964), p.33.

[68] Ibid.

extent it reproduced C.H. Spurgeon's instructions to his students.[69] The problem was that only a limited number of people engaged in preaching were able to read this textbook.

Preaching within the ECB needs to be understood not so much in the context of Protestant tradition but rather in the context of the preaching tradition in Russian Orthodox culture. There are a number of works devoted to preaching in the Orthodox Church. Among them is the work of O. Prokhvatilova, "Orthodox sermons and prayer as a phenomenon of modern oral language",[70] which presents a more or less thorough analysis of the homiletic genre. Her work is the only study of this subject that was published as a book in Russia. Since the Orthodox Church was built on the basis of strict hierarchy, with authority flowing down to local priests, the genre of the sermon gained a more stable form which could be easily described.[71] Their form and content differed significantly from standard forms of evangelical preaching. What is crucially important for the present study of ECB hermeneutics is Prokhvatilova's analysis of the concrete and pragmatic[72] characteristics of the Orthodox sermon as a speech act.

The notion of Orthodoxy or even (within that) Russian Orthodoxy is very broad, incorporating a number of very different trends in hermeneutics, theology, and preaching as can be seen from the instruction in the "Priest's Handbook". [73] This Handbook points to two major trends in the style of Orthodox preaching: rhetorical and charismatic.[74] The rhetoric

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[69] C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students: a selection from addresses delivered to the students of The Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1876).

[70] O.A. Prokhvatilova O.A., *Pravoslavnaya propoved' i molitva kak fenomen sovremennoy zvuchashchey rechi*, [Orthodox preaching and prayer as a phenomenon of modern oral speech] (Volgograd:Volgogradskiy gos. un-t, 1999).

[71] O.S. Zakharenkova *Zhanrovye osobennosti sovremennoj propovedi: na materiale tekstov krasnojarskikh i zheleznogorskikh sv'ashchennosluzhitelei* [Genre peculiarities of the modern sermon from materials of priests from Zheleznogork and Krasnoyarsk] (in *Lingvisticheskii ezhegodnik Sibiri*, N. 6, Krasnoyarsk: 2004, pp. 169-176).

[72] The term 'pragmatic' here is used in the semiotic sense, as related to the impact of the homiletic system on those involved in it. Prokhvatilova herself here used the term 'semantic' but it seems that such a usage is misleading.

[73] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook] (Moscow: *Izdatelstvo Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, V. 1,1977; V. 2,1978; V. 3; V. 4, 1983; V. 5, 1986). This was a five-volume edition designed as a reference book for priests of the Russian Orthodox Church. The first volumes of this book considered questions of liturgy (v.1), the Orthodox sacral year (vv.2-3), and the arrangement of Orthodox Church buildings (v. 4). Volume 5 was completely devoted to issues of preaching. It contained the theory of homiletics and sample outlines of sermons on different topics.

[74] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook], V. 5, pp. 8-9.

school (Luka Zhidyata, Metropolitan Illarion of Kiev, the Reverend Feodosiy from Pechora) appeared during the time of Tsar Aleksey's church reforms and had a tendency to evaluate preaching from the perspective of the art of speaking in public. The charismatic trend appeared as a romantic reaction to the rationalism of the rhetorical approach of the nineteenth century and it was embodied in teaching of *slavianofily* (slavophiles).[75] It was represented by works by Y. Amphiteatrov and N. Favorov. The idea of the charismatic trend underlined the crucial importance of the spiritual involvement of preachers in the process of preaching. Preaching was considered as a mysterious revelation of God's presence. In the later development of preaching in Russia, the charismatic trend prevailed though, according to the authors of the "Priest's Handbook", it did not sit comfortably with many leaders of the Orthodox Church.[76]

If preaching in the ECB is considered in the light of the Orthodox ideas of charismatic homiletics, striking analogies can be noted. Although on the surface the ECB preachers and their Orthodox counterparts had very few similarities in the style and content of their sermons, actually the general view of preaching in ECB churches was shared with Orthodoxy. At the same time, it seems that the basic homogeneity of ECB and Orthodoxy in this one area was not just a result of their generic kinship. It reveals certain common aspects of religious thinking and spiritual atmosphere.

An exploration of the different traits of preaching in the religious consciousness of both Orthodoxy and ECB may help explain what implications these traits had for the applied hermeneutics of ECB. When Prokhvatilova considers charismatic preaching in the Russian Orthodox Church, she distinguishes the following five characteristics:

1. continuity between speech and actions;
2. divine inspiration;
3. merging of divine and human;
4. orientation to salvation;
5. social conformity (*sobornost*).[77]

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[75] Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe: East and West in the religious ideology of Russia* (London: SCM, 1999).

[76] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* proposed a project for synthesis of the two approaches, though it admitted that 'elaboration of the homiletic method is still a future work': *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook], V. 5, p. 9.

[77] Prokhvatilova, *Pravoslavnaya propoved' i molitva kak fenomen sovremennoy zvuchashchey rechi*, [Orthodox preaching and prayer as a phenomenon of modern oral speech], pp. 141-144.

The next section will use these characteristics to deduce the main principles of hermeneutics of ECB, under the heading of charismatic preaching.

d. Principles of charismatic preaching

1. Continuity between speech and action

According to the "Priest's Handbook", continuity between speech and actions was the main feature of preaching in apostolic times. The charismatic sermon aimed at reflecting an internal spirit and power since it was to be heard not just as speech but as ministry, the "ministry of the word", which was empowered by the presence of the Holy Spirit and was an extension of the ministry of Jesus. Orthodox teachers stress that a true sermon must be "not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor.2:4).[78] It is expected that a charismatic sermon should be accompanied by manifestations of God's power: "Similarly to the Apostles, the apostolic fathers were enlightened by the Holy Spirit to such an extent that they could claim, like Ignatius the God-bearer: 'the Holy Spirit announced to me…'."[79]

Russian evangelicals borrowed the principle of continuity between words and actions. This can be seen in many instructions for ECB preachers. For example, S. Fadiukhin in his article "Advice to preachers",[80] repeats the words of the "Priest's Handbook" almost literally: "A sermon, irreproachable in its form, blameless from the point of view of homiletics, but pronounced by a preacher whose words do not conform to his deeds, brings no benefit to its listeners. A preacher is, first of all, a witness of Jesus Christ, and he must be informed about the spoken subject from his personal experience."[81]

The inseparability of words and actions implied the great importance of the extra-linguistic background of interpretation (for example, the the appearance of preachers). The authority of individual interpreters had primary importance for ECB. Reasoning lost its power if it sprang from a person who could not confirm his/her spiritual right to interpret the sacred texts. Personal holiness was an ultimate argument in proving the correctness or incorrectness of any particular interpretation. The BCC textbook on exegesis very clearly points to spiritual maturity as the main factor that guarantees success of interpretation.[82] Admittedly the AUCECB never proposed the idea of a consortium of holy interpreters or a

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[78] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook], V. 5, p. 12.

[79] Ibid. quoting Epistle to Delphi, 7.79.

[80] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Sov'ety propovednikam' [Advice to preachers], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 33.

[81] Ibid., p. 33.

[82] Karev,.Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p. 10.

"department of truth". Indeed, in the historical situation it was simply impossible to point to someone as a model saint, whose hermeneutical authority would be irreproachable. Nevertheless, it seems that - especially in the period after Karev - the editorial board of *BV* tried to promote certain standard interpretations by acknowledged past leaders of the Union.

2. Divine inspiration

According to Prokhvatilova, divine inspiration is one of the most important characteristics of charismatic sermons.[83] True preaching inevitably possesses divine inspiration as soon as it proclaims God's Word. A sermon and its interpretation of God's Word could be understood not only as the Holy Scriptures but as an embodiment of divinity in general. It is true that the greatest manifestation of God's Word took place in Jesus and that subsequent proclamation of God's Word always has certain limits because it always implies the challenge of expressing inexpressible heavenly truths by means of a meagre human language, but the task is possible. The idea of divine inspiration raises the problem, however, of ways of rendering the divine message intelligible to the popular masses attending Orthodox worship. Russian philologist Kh. Kusse believes that "the mystery of the embodiment of the faith into the revelation of the Word through human language may imply homiletic acceptance of rhetoric as well as its denial. In some cases God becomes flesh and is condensed to human words. In this case rhetoric receives 'divine indulgence'. Or God may oppose himself to human language which means that the human word must die and give place to the risen logos of God."[84]

The belief in the inspired character of homiletic interpretation was shared by the ECB. Moreover, the very act of preaching had to manifest itself not just as a ministry but as an embodiment of the spiritual constitution of the one who proclaimed the message. This attitude toward preaching as an act of the miraculous manifestation of God's presence becomes obvious in Fadiukhin's argumentation: "It is not enough that a preacher is a converted person transformed into Christ's image. It is necessary that the preacher should have the divine inspiration to communicate in written and oral form correctly and

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[83] Prokhvatilova, *Pravoslavnaya propoved' i molitva kak fenomen sovremennoy zvuchashchey rechi*, [Orthodox preaching and prayer as a phenomenon of modern oral speech], p.142.

[84] K.H. Kusse, 'Istina i propovedovanie. «Zhivoe slovo» arkhiepiskopa Amvrosiya i sootnesenie mezhdu gomiletikoy i ritorikoi' [Truth and preaching: 'Living word' by Archbishop Amvroiy and correlation between homiletics and rhetoric.], in *Logicheskiy analiz yazyka: Istina i istinnost' v kul'ture i yazyke* [Logical analysis of language: truth and correctness in culture and language] (Moscow: Nauka, 1995), pp. 78-85, p. 81.

consistently. He should have a special call from God".[85] In other words, the very rhetorical abilities of preachers had to demonstrate the miraculous presence of the Holy Spirit. It is clear that in this case training in rhetoric was unwelcome because it might contaminate the experience of a pure outpouring of divine inspiration.

The understanding of the inspired nature of interpretation had a number of very important consequences. First of all, it made ECB interpreters take their interpretation very seriously. For them there were no grades or shades of grey in understanding the Bible - only black and white. If their interpretation did not proclaim God's will directly it meant that they had succumbed to the devil's delusion. Such an attitude demanded great care in proclaiming anything new. Most preachers did not dare to step away from the text of the Scriptures so their preaching consisted in a word-by-word repetition of sacred stories. Their caution can be explained in terms of the conviction of the static character of meaning. Interpreters of ECB did not distinguish between pragmatics and semantics in the text. The meaning of every biblical passage was considered fixed once and for all. Robert Võsu of the AUCECB (from Estonia) observes: "Eternal truths are sealed in the Bible. Their value surpasses any geographical or temporal boundaries. Circumstances change with the times but the truth stays forever. That is why Jesus Christ said: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away' (Mt. 24:35)."[86]

However, the interpreters of the Soviet period do significantly differ from Russian Baptist interpreters after Perestroika. Today's ECB ministers take for granted the historical-linguistic paradigm of hermeneutics which implies that an interpreter should initially understand the meaning of the text for ancient recipients and, then, link this meaning to contemporary circumstances and, thus, make it meaningful for modern readers of the Bible.[87] Most of the authors of *BV* would deny that there is any difference between what sacred texts meant in the past and in the present. As result, the process of linking ancient texts to contemporary circumstances was hardly to be found in the pages of *BV* during the Soviet period. The conviction of the deep unity between ancient and contemporary meanings of the Bible was rooted in a static perception of history. For example, they did not see any great

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[85] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Sov'ety propovednikam' [Advice to preachers], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 35.

[86] R. Võsu, 'Sviatoy Dukh' [The Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 2 (1983), p. 8.

[87] This paradigm was propagated at the beginning of the 1990s in Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), which was translated into Russian and used as a primary source for hermeneutical studies at many seminaries and Bible schools.

difference between the biblical church in Corinth and the church in Soviet Kiev:[88] even though historical analysis was never denied by ECB, in the common opinion of most Baptists it could not contribute much to an understanding of the Bible.

The belief in the monosemantic character of the Scriptures made the ECB very sensitive to conflicts of interpretations. Potentially this situation could be, and actually was, a source of numerous arguments between different authoritative interpreters in local communities. Leaders of the AUCECB were greatly concerned about reducing these arguments. For example, pastor of the Tallinn church in Estonia, Osvald Tärk, said: "The atmosphere of intolerance in God's Kingdom is very dangerous. The harm often appears when believers set narrower boundaries than Jesus himself… This kind of intolerance appears when believers are convinced that their opinion stands closer to the truth than all others."[89]It is not that Tärk doubts the existence of a single true interpretation,[90] but his idea is that believers should admit the limitations of their comprehension of the truth and, hence, demonstrate intellectual modesty. The only rational truth that every believer had to realize was the truth that "God performs our sanctification."[91] Tärk was a profound thinker, but as an Estonian his thinking was shaped by his Estonian context and his Russian-speaking audience did not always understand him.

3. Merging of divine and human

The principle of merging the divine and human is akin to the principle of divine inspiration. Orthodox preachers believe that during the process of preaching they come in touch with the Creator and that God reveals God's self to them, giving them the ability to proclaim their words. Thus the sermon is literally a conversation between God and humans in which the divine imperative becomes converted into a form comprehensible to people and, in the opposite direction, categories of human thinking come into conformity with the inspired truth.[92] This is something more than simply divine inspiration. Preachers do not just pass the words of God on to their listeners. Their words possess the divine power which manifests

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[88] See A.V.K. (A.V. Karev), 'Obraz khristianina v Novom Zavete' [Image of the Christian in the New Testament], *BV*, vol. 2 (1963), p. 68.

[89] O. Tärk, 'Evangeliye ot Marka' [The Gospel of Mark], *BV*, vol. 5 (1978), p. 11.

[90] This can be seen, for example, in O. Tärk, 'Bud'te edinodushni i edinomyslenny' [Being one in spirit and thoughts], *BV*, vol. 4 (1987), p. 5.

[91] Ibid., p. 7.

[92] Prokhvatilova, *Pravoslavnaya propoved' i molitva kak fenomen sovremennoy zvuchashchey rechi*, [Orthodox preaching and prayer as a phenomenon of modern oral speech], p. 142.

itself in God's grace.[93] God himself is present in them. The best term to express this idea is "theurgy".[94] Orthodox preachers believe in the intrinsic power of the sounds of speech they proclaim. Words for them are not merely conventional signs but parts of the subjects to which they refer.[95]

The principle of the merging of divine and human may be reformulated as merging of signified and signifier in the myth-centred consciousness. For example, the name Satan (*satana*) is an organic part of Satan as a "real" creature. This name cannot be altered and its pronunciation speaks directly of its bearer while, say, the English version of the same name does not have the same effect because it is not the genuine name and, hence, it cannot (for example) provoke the appearance of the unclean spirit.[96] If a preacher proclaims that he hands someone over to Satan it means that Satan immediately takes power over that person. From this perspective, to make even an insignificant mistake in incantation may lead to very dangerous consequences. This is why the Orthodox laws prescribe reading of sacred texts and forbids reciting them by heart.[97] An example of a theurgical formula in Orthodox preaching can be seen even in the introductory prayer, "In the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen", which is a compulsory part of any sermon. The non-conventional character of songs in the semiotic system of sacral texts creates an atmosphere of special sensitivity to

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[93] According to the influential definition of St. George Palama, 'grace is the general energy, and God's power, and activity of the God in three hypostases': G.Palama, 'Capita Physica', in *Patrologia Greaca*, ed. J.-P Migne, v.150 (Harvard: Harvard University: 1865), col. 1169. In other words, grace in Orthodoxy is considered as a sort of substantial divine power.

[94] Theurgy is cooperation of God and humans. This word is seldom used in the Orthodox Church because it was strongly associated with Platonism (especially receiving its negative connotation in the times of Julian the Apostate). But the idea of theurgy can be clearly seen in such a source as Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), Chapter 9, 'Two Aspects of the Church', pp. 174-196, who defined sacred objects and actions as 'material focuses in which amalgam of divine energy and human art is presented'. The doctrine of theurgy was openly used in the philosophy of late *slavyanofil* Vladimir Solovyov.

[95] M.B. Mechkovskaia, *Iazyk i religiia* [Language and religion] (Moscow: Grand, 1998), p. 42.

[96] See A.M. Kamchatnov, *Istoriia i germenevtika slav'anskoi Biblii* [History and hermeneutics of the Slavic Bible] (Moscow: Nauka, 1998), pp.76-106. Actually, the situation here is more subtle. The translation of the sacred names *a priori* is possible but it involves references not to the object but to the name of the object. It is similar to the situation with personal names. We cannot translate the name Ivan as John without involving a certain convention in which we agree to call John a man named Ivan (the initial name here can never lose its significance).

[97] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook], V. 1, p. 22 .

every small lexical entity. Spiritual adoption of words is considered a mystical act.[98] The essence of a thing can be perceived not through its attributes but from its name, which is considered as ontologically connected to the thing.[99] According to the priest Pavel Florensky, "a name cannot be defined, described, or characterized through listing its traits or its features. All features taken separately in any of their combinations are unable to render the essence of the name: its structure, its integrity, its unique form. A name can be perceived only through itself, *per se intelligitur*."[100] In Orthodox thinking the success of religious actions (for example, God's reaction to a prayer) depends significantly on the authenticity of sacral texts used in the rites. Any linguistic distortion may be considered a dangerous blasphemy.

On the face of it, in this regard ECB differs significantly from Orthodoxy. Indeed, they did not have any idea of sacred language; they did not use sacred formulas and did not memorize prayers. Baptists struggled against "Orthodox superstitions" in the ranks of their church members. An evidence of such struggle might be seen in the wide circulation in local churches of the book "From whence did it all appear", by emigrant pastor P. Rogozin. It sharply criticized certain "magical" elements in Orthodoxy and Catholicism such as veneration of icons and relics, existence of formal prayers and worship services, sacral status of clergy.[101] This controversial material was never published in *BV*.

The question about the existence of theurgical elements in the spirituality of ECB is not an easy one. It may be formulated in the following form: "Did ECB discourse operate with signal structures in which signifiers coincided with the thing signified or in which signifiers dominated over the signified?" The formal answer to this question should apparently be negative. At the same time, the poetic nature of Baptist hermeneutics, which did not exist outside its rhetorical context, demonstrates certain similarities to Orthodox theurgy, which can be demonstrated in a passage from the article by Karev "The healing power of the wounds of Calvary" from his popular cycle "Calvary":[102]

> What can we do with our heart when it grows cold toward Jesus? There is just one way of healing: to go to Calvary and to touch the blazing wounds of our crucified

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[98] P. Florensky, *Ikonostas* [The Iconostasis], Moscow, "Iskusstvo", 1995, p. 210.

[99] A.M. Kamchatnov, *Istoriia i germenevtika slav'anskoi Biblii* [History and hermeneutics of the Slavic Bible], p. 74.

[100] P. Florenskiy, *U vodorazdelov mysli* [At the watershed of thought] (*Sochinenija v chetyreh tomah*, v.3 (2), Moscow: Mysl', 1999), p. 212.

[101] P. Rogozin, *Otkuda vs'o ehto poiavilos'?: obriady i obychai khristianskoi religii pri svete Sviaschennogo Pisaniia* [How did it appear?: the rites and customs of the Christian religion in the light of the Holy Scriptures] (Rostov-na-Donu: "Probuzhdenie", 1993; Nice, France: The Russian Tract Society, 1937).

[102] A.V. Karev, 'Golgotha' [Calvary], *BV*, vol. 3 (1970), p. 19.

> Lord with our dying hearts. And the wounds of our Saviour will ignite the dying flame of the first love in our heart. Do we not know from our experience that every time we come in touch with the Saviour crucified for our sins our heart starts to beat stronger, which is the sign of a flaming spirit in us?[103]

In Karev's works the idiom "to go to Calvary" means "to meditate on the story of Jesus' death". So what he says here is that reflections upon the narrative of Christ allow sustained true spirituality. This was a universal recipe employed by the ECB teachers. However, it is quite clear that the direct meaning, the signified, was not Karev's goal in writing this text. The key metaphors, like "Calvary", "blazing wounds", "flaming spirit", were the most important in the message of the author. Indeed, it was exactly the image of the "wounds of Christ" that triggered Karev's speech. His task consisted not so much in delivering information but in demonstrating a certain spiritual mood, in creating a definite emotional atmosphere.

In this process the biblical vocabulary had primary importance because it initiated the discourse. The signifiers defined the signified, not the opposite. There was not an absolute need to use certain language, such as was the case in Orthodoxy. Rather it might be compared with the language of lyric poetry in which the way of expression constitutes the essence of communication. Indeed, Karev's language in his exhortation to ponder over the suffering of Jesus already contains a system of values and a spectrum of emotional and behavioural paradigms. Like poetry or music, this sermon can be considered as a kind of "magic" in the sense that it signals a system in it which not simply reflects the world but creates a perception of the world. Communication is being deployed not from the subject to its linguistic expression but backwards from language to subject. It was typical that, like poetry recited during worship services, sermons were intended not to instruct or inform but to create or re-create a certain psychological experience. This specific aspect of ECB preaching makes it similar, to some extent, to theurgical elements in the Orthodox mentality.

While recognizing the extraordinary importance of sacred signifiers in the linguistic system of ECB, it is not the case that the power of words for evangelicals ever reached the level of real theurgy. It is easy to see what the source of the primacy of words was over their meanings. It was the presence of an absolute authoritative set of sacred texts. For example, any true Baptist had to claim: "Christ died for my sin", whatever this might mean in precise theological terms, because "the Bible says so". At the same time, they might disagree with the interpretation of these words or allow these words to remain without interpretation in their own understanding of their faith. But usually they would accept that it was not simply

[103] Ibid., p. 19.

pronouncing these words that produced a certain action (for example, protection against "accusations of Satan") but rather that there was a spiritual condition that accompanied this pronunciation. So it was not a theurgical incantation, at least, not in the literal sense. Evangelical believers were committed to belief in the existence of the absolute truth in the Bible but obviously very few of them could absolutise and divinise their perception of this truth.

Unlike Orthodox believers, ECB did not divinise every particular linguistic entity. Rather they sanctified a certain linguistic structure inside the Russian language which may be characterized as the specific religious functional style. In Russian philology the notion of functional style (developed by M. Bakhtin)[104] is common, and it might be defined as a stratum of language that satisfies the following three characteristics: 1. it reflects a certain side of social life and includes a certain set of topics; 2. it reflects certain conditions of communication; 3. it has certain dominant ideas defined by its purpose.[105] Functional style may be described as a way of communication inside a certain group of people involved into a certain activity in a certain situation.

The ECB definitely had a tendency to sanctify the style of communication accepted in their congregations. This was a natural consequence of the idea of holy community. Adherence to a specific style can be seen in preferences in vocabulary and certain grammatical forms. For example, Karev in the quoted passage uses the word *plamya* (flame) which belongs to the "high" style[106]. Using computer statistical software we can find that its frequency in *BV* is almost twice as high as the frequency of its vernacular synonym *ogon* "fire". At the same time, the style of ECB communication was not stable. For example, in spiritual writing Karev uses the specific "pious style" but when he writes articles for official columns his style does not differ from the secular.

4. Orientation to salvation

A direct consequence of the divine inspiration of preaching is its orientation toward salvation, which is a process. In Orthodoxy any revelation of God is filled with the spirit of salvation

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[104] A detailed account of this concept may be found in R. Boer, *Bakhtin and genre theory in biblical studies* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

[105] *BV* never used the expression 'to sit and pray' but only 'to stand and pray' or 'to kneel and pray'.

[106] The theory of three styles (high, middle and low) was developed by M. Lomonosov in the 1700s. It is presented in (1758) M.V. Lomonosov, 'Predislovie o pol'ze knig tserkovnykh v rossiiskom iazyke' [Preface about the usefulness of church books in Russian language] (in *M.V. Lomonosov o vospitanii i obrazovanii*, Moscow: 1991, p. 73-75). The high style implied archaic and solemn vocabulary. This style was recommended for use in religious spheres.

through the mission of Jesus who expiated the sins of humans and redeemed them from condemnation and final death. So preaching is an act of communion with Christ through the saving word. The famous Russian saint Bishop Tikhon Zadonsky (lit. "from the Eastern bank of Don-river") underlines that "using God's word pastors open for themselves and for their listeners the door to Christ, the Source of Life and eternal bliss."[107]

The orientation toward salvation was postulated by ECB in most of their official doctrinal documents. For example, the 1985 Doctrine of ECB (to be considered later) states: "The Bible reveals God's truth proclaiming God's love and eternal life in Christ".[108] Karev, in the previously mentioned article "What the Bible says", claims that the content of the Bible consists in descriptions of ways of salvation in Christ and – crucially - sanctification in the Holy Spirit.[109] Moreover the Bible includes prophecies whose role consists in proving scriptural trustworthiness. In other words, interpretation was already determined by certain expectations of the interpreters. As a result, training of the interpreters consisted not so much in presenting a methodology of interpretation but in exposition of what the outcome of the interpretation must look like. In many texts we can observe how the ECB postulates the general character of the Bible's content.

Virtually any article that touches the problem of biblical interpretation presents an 'official' vision of the Bible's agenda. Although the details and the styles of the presentations may vary from article to article, all authors agree that the salvation of humanity by Christ and particularly the personal salvation of every individual stand at the core of the biblical message. Such an approach challenges interpreters to reveal the prototype of Christ everywhere in the Bible. The christological expectation in biblical hermeneutics was embodied in the principle of "Christ-centredness". Christ-centredness was the indisputable value of any interpreter[110] or preacher.[111]

5. Social conformity (*sobornost*)

In the Orthodox Church the concept of social conformity is a formative ecclesial ideal, alongside the better-known idea of apostolic succession.[112] It is included in the Nicene Creed

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[107] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook], V. 5, p.625.

[108] *EKhB*, p. 13.

[109] A.V.K. (A.V. Karev), 'Chto govorit bibliia' [What the Bible says], *BV*, vol. 4 (1963), p. 25.

[110] V.A. Mitskevich, *Bibliologiia* [Bible studies] (Moscow: VSEKhB), pp. 15-16.

[111] *Kratkiy kurs gomiletiki* [Short course on homiletics], pp. 30-31.

[112] In brief form this idea is described in T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Penguin Books, 1967), pp.243-268.

which states the belief in "only One, Holy, Universal [Socially Conformed, in Russian Orthodox interpretation], and Apostolic Church" (μίαν, Ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν). The idea of *sobornost* began to play a very important role during the revival of Russian nationalism in the 1800s. It was developed especially by the founders of the Slavophile movement Ivan Kireevskiy and Alexey Khomyakov.[113] According to priest and philosopher S.Bulgakov, "*sobornost* is unity in plurality. Many belong to the Church, nevertheless it is single. Everyone who truly belongs to it possesses also all the rest of its members. He/she himself/herself becomes a church."[114] In other words, *sobornost* presupposes the complete dilution of individuality inside the sacred congregation.

In preaching, *sobornost* implies the equality or even the identity of preachers and parishioners. It supposes that preachers are just the mouth of the congregation. In the opinion of Orthodox Christians, a priest's words cannot come into contradiction with the common spirit of the congregation. That is why the proclamations of the preachers, as a rule, are impersonal. For example, they use the pronoun "we" instead of "I". *Sobornost* implies also an uncritical reception of preaching. The authority of leaders stands above any doctrine or ethical norm. Criticism of the clergy in Orthodoxy is one of the gravest sins.

It is not that *sobornost* was present in ECB in its full form, because the ECB Union was not such a solid and monolithic organization as the Russian Orthodox Church. Despite all the endeavours of state authorities to make the AUCECB a powerful administrative centre that would be able to control all evangelicals on the territory of the Soviet Union, it never became overwhelmingly dominating. The basic Baptist ecclesial principle that proclaims the autonomy of every local community did not allow the building of the Baptist Union according to a hierarchical model. This fact became very apparent during years of emerging dissent. Nevertheless, ECB existed in a society driven by the principle of the primacy of the social over the personal. The state ideology of collectivism was the Communist version of the traditional nationalistic idea of *Sobornost*. In this atmosphere the AUCECB could not avoid the influence of the idea of the great importance of social conformity. While exploring the history of publications by the AUCECB, we saw the concern of Union leaders for the unity of believers. To think that such a concern arose only from obedience to the state order is to

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[113] Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian `Europe: East and West in the religious ideology of Russia*, p. 206.

[114] *Sv'ataia Rus'. Ehnciklopedicheskii slovar' russkoi civilizacii* [Holy Russia, Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Russian Civilization] (Ed. O.A. Platonov, Moscow: Pravoslavnoe izdatel'stvo "Ehnciklopediia russkoi civilizacii", 2000), p. 825.

oversimplify the issue. Striving to achieve conformity lay deep in the subconsciousness of people of that time.

But *Sobornost* was not limited just by an aspiration to build a strong spiritual community. Its core idea consisted in the sacralisation of religious congregations, and this was very close to the heart of ECB. The main difference between the Russian Orthodox Church and ECB consisted in what ecclesiological structure had sacral power: centre or periphery. In contrast to the ROC, Evangelical Christians-Baptists ascribed supreme authority to their local churches. Of course, only naive people could believe that Baptist churches in an authoritarian country and under the authority of the All-Union Council might actually follow the principles of democracy.

But for the present study the administrative aspect of s*obornost* is not as important as its hermeneutical aspect. This aspect of *sobornost* implied that social conformity was the criterion for the correctness of biblical interpretation. Thus, in the previously considered article for preachers, S. Fadiukhin points to the local congregation as a single authority for confirmation of the inspired character of preaching: "The second sign [after internal conviction about divine inspiration – A.P.] that the preacher really speaks from God is approval of his sermons by believers… Most believers listen to a true preacher with attention and afterwards admit that his words were true. In this regard, the response of elderly believers with much spiritual experience is especially precious for evaluation of the preacher".[115] Interpreters within the ECB always had to have in mind their potential listeners and their inspiration was to a great extent determined by the expected response of the congregation. In other words, the interpretation of the Scriptures actually was not a matter of only a single individual. Interpretation belonged to the whole community which delegated to preachers the sacred right to express the divine truths taken from the communal treasury of God's children.

e. Conclusion

While exploring the principles and methods of biblical hermeneutics of the ECB communities it becomes clear that they were closely connected to the application of the Bible in the lives of believers. On the surface, the way the Bible was interpreted in *BV* seems eclectic and inconsistent. But this conclusion can be made only if it is considered outside the context in which the interpretations were offered.

The Bible for ECB preachers and writers was clear and inspired. It spoke to them as it had spoken to the first readers. Hermeneutics within the ECB was strongly attached to the

[115] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Sov'ety propovednikam' [Advice to preachers], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 35.

practice of preaching. A common feature of ECB hermeneutics consists in its inseparability from a personal spirituality of the interpreters who shared their spiritual experience with others through the process of biblical interpretation. So hermeneutics appears primarily in conjunction with the interests, insights and aspirations of the interpretative community. This means that the interpretational methodology of the ECB in a more or less consistent form cannot be studied because it simply did not exist. In other words, the question about how the ECB interpreted the Bible can be answered only through an analysis of the role of the Bible in the life of the ECB.

This chapter has partly answered this question by showing that the Bible was usually considered as a source for preaching – and that preaching constituted the main instrument of spiritual and communal formation in churches of the ECB. The Orthodox background, as became obvious, was crucial. But this is still insufficient for a full understating of the nature and character of the ECB hermeneutics. It is crucial to know not only that the ECB used the Bible for preaching but also the aim and subject of this preaching. The process of interpretation cannot be understood without knowledge of results of this interpretation expressed in a message of the preachers. So the next step is analysis of different spheres in which biblical interpretation was applied. The goal of this analysis is to find the area in which the role of the Bible was crucial and formative. As soon as this is done then the analysis will be able to move further, looking more deeply at the reading of the Bible by the ECB and seeking to explain the specificity of the community's hermeneutical paradigm.

Part II. Biblical hermeneutics and aims in ECB publications

Chapter 5
Theological aims

a. Introduction

Because the theological convictions of any Christian denomination or group being studied normally define its identity,[1] an investigation of the doctrinal position of the AUCECB is necessary, and this area has already been addressed in a number of works written about the ECB as a community.[2] This chapter will seek to demonstrate, from an examination of primary sources, that although the presence of a consistent theology was not crucial for the AUCECB during the Soviet period, this does not mean that the ECB leadership ignored doctrinal questions completely. The analysis offered here of Baptist and Evangelical Christian theological documents, an analysis which has not been undertaken in a scholarly manner before, shows that within the movements that formed the basis for the AUCECB there were serious theological aims. However, in the Baptist and Evangelical Christian movements and in the AUCECB the more theoretical dimensions of theology were eclipsed by an overwhelming aspiration for a spirituality that was worked out in daily life. They did not feel the need for the well-worked-out doctrinal support which is a priority in many other Christian traditions. This chapter looks first at early Baptist and Evangelical Christian confessions and then moves on to a detailed analysis of the era of the AUCECB and its doctrinal publications and statements, in order to examine the continuity in belief and also the new developments that took place.

b. Doctrinal quest in the development of Russian Evangelicals

1. Early confessions by Russian evangelical groups

Although formulating precise doctrinal statements was never a priority for Russian evangelical groups, the search for a doctrinal unity that would foster a common spirituality was clearly present at times throughout their history. In the period of the AUCECB, operating as it did within the very difficult religious context of the USSR, the leaders within the AUCECB understood that they needed to refer to properly formulated creeds or confessions (they used the words inter-changeably). They considered the availability of doctrinal

[1] For a wider study of identity in relation to Orthodoxy, see S.K. Batalden, ed., *Seeking God: the recovery of religious identity in Orthodox Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993).

[2] See below for details.

documents to be an unavoidable attribute of any religious group. At the same time, most of them considered that doctrinal statements were not the essential glue that ultimately maintained their unity.[3] Moreover, they were very careful in propagating any particular doctrinal statement because they understood the danger of internal dissent which could surface if they insisted too strongly on members holding to certain "biblical truths", for instance beliefs and practices that had been causes of division between Baptists and Evangelical Christians in the past. Another reason why they did not give priority to defining their doctrines was the presence of existing Baptist and Evangelical Christian confessions of faith, and these documents were sometimes referred to during state interrogations of Baptists.[4] For AUCECB leaders those historical creeds were in no sense obligatory, and they did not want them to be a bone of contention inside the Union, but an understanding of theological processes in the ECB congregations is impossible without some knowledge of the history of the doctrinal quest among evangelicals in Russia and the processes that led to confessions being produced.

Virtually every book on the Baptist and Evangelical Christian traditions in Russia includes certain materials concerning their doctrines. The first analysis of the doctrinal documents of Russian evangelicals was attempted in 1908 in Bishop Aleksey's *Materials on the history of rationalist-religious movements in the south of Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century*.[5] This book is of great value because it contains unique documents, a number of which have not been preserved in any other form. At the same time, the analysis of the evangelical texts is quite superficial and sometimes results in criticism of "ungodly" heresies which says more about the Russian Orthodox perspective than about Baptist beliefs. It is noteworthy that Aleksey saw no difference between the theological and the devotional

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[3] For a very helpful discussion of this in the Estonian context see T. Pilli *Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 166-176.

[4] The most famous Communist specialist on the ECB, Leonid Mitrokhin, used old documents for his account of their doctrines. As a result he came to the false conclusion that the ECB was a Calvinist movement. He relied on Oncken's German Baptist Hamburg Confession of Faith. See L.N. Mitrokhin, *Baptizm* [Baptists] (Moscow: IPL, 1966), p.232.

[5] Bishop Aleksey/Doronitsin, *Materiali Dlia Istorii Religiozno-Ratsionalisticheskogo Dvizheniia na Juge Rossii vo Vtoroi Polovine XIX Stoletiia* [Materials for the history of religious-rationalist movements in the south of Russia in the second part of the nineteenth century], (Kazan: BM BD, 1908). According to the popular classification of the nineteenth century, rationalist religions (or cults) were contrasted to mystical religions. The term rationalist religion implied their grounding in the Bible, while the mystical religions (like *Khlisty*) were based on the personal revelations of (or to) their followers.

texts of the "sectarians". So he considered even poems and hymns as among the sources of – as he saw it - heretical doctrines.

Reviews of historical theological documents by evangelical commentators and historians can be found in such works as the "History of the Evangelical and Baptist Movements in Ukraine",[6] in the almanac, "History of the Baptists",[7] and especially in the first volume of "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists", by Savinsky.[89] Unlike other authors, Savinsky not only presents a compilation of various doctrinal statements produced by evangelicals but attempts a comparative analysis of a number of the most prominent creeds. He evidently wants to discover an "evangelical tradition", to find what Russian evangelicals have commonly believed about any particular doctrinal question. Pursuing this goal, Savinsky pays little attention to the varied historical contexts in which different doctrinal statements were produced. Instead, he attempts a doctrinal synthesis which is made to serve as a template in an effort to present a single doctrinal position within the ECB. The value of Savinsky's analysis for scholarly historical studies is reduced by this pragmatic theological aim, though some of his account is useful.

Savinsky distinguishes a double function present in all the various creeds of the Russian evangelicals: didactic and apologetic. Sometimes, however, it is hard to distinguish between these two aims.[10] Also, he contrasts personal creeds (that is, creeds produced or presented by an individual or a small group of believers) with doctrines formulated by whole communities, which makes sense when producing a classification of theological documents.[11] The earliest of the documents were written by individuals in order to speak about their faith in specific circumstances. Although Savinsky uses these personal texts in a limited way, they are very significant because they helped to shape the ECB tradition and they clearly demonstrate that later AUCECB theology did not develop in a systematic way. The corpus of early confessions consists of a series of documents written before the First Russian Revolution. Most of them were later stored in the AUCECB archive and hence are mentioned

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[6] J. Reshetnikov, *Obzor istorii evangel'sko-baptistskogo bratstva v Ukraine* [Survey of the history of the Evangelical Baptist brotherhood in Ukraine] (Odessa: "Bogomyslie", 2000).

[7] *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], Vyp.1/ Sostavitel S.Sannikov (Odessa: Bogomyslie, 1996)

[8] Savinskiy, Part I, p. 313.

[9] A short version of the same text was published in *HECB*, pp. 438-450.

[10] Savinsky, Part I, p. 313.

[11] Ibid.

by Savinsky in his *History*. Some other documents were recently found in the Crimea State archive.[12]

The following are the most prominent doctrinal documents of the predecessors of the AUCECB in the period up to the 1905 Revolution.

1. The first known doctrinal document of the Russian Baptists is the "Dogma for those newly converted to the Russian Brotherhood",[13] which is ascribed to Mikhail Ratushny, an early Baptist leader, and which is dated 1873. This document was found by the police during a search of the Baptist church building in Osnova village (Kherson province). The copy was written by hand by Ratushny, who was the leader of that congregation. However, it is clear that he was no more than an editor and was not the author of the "Dogma". Its similarity to the German Baptist "Hamburg Confession" implies that it was prepared by some of the German missionaries to the region. S. Sannikov proposes that it was compiled by Johann Wieler, who was the chief supervisor of Russian-speaking evangelical believers in the South of Ukraine.[14]

2. Another early document, "Confession of the Russian Baptists",[15] was compiled about 1880 by Ivan Ryaboshapka,[16] pastor of one of the Kherson provincial Baptist congregations. This confession was submitted to the authorities in order to seek to receive state registration after the *Makovsky* circular.[17]

3. There is a series of short Molokan confessions from the 1880s. The series includes a creed by Zinoviy Zakharov, whose congregation was part of the Russian Baptist Union. This confession is not mentioned by Savinsky.[18]

4. The confession of Chaplinsky, a new convert to the Russian Brotherhood.[19] This document is not mentioned by Savinsky. The manuscript is, however, stored in the archive of

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[12] Those documents are indicated in the list below.

[13] *Veroucheniie nonoobraschennogo russkogo bratstva* [Dogma for those newly converted to the Russian Brotherhood], Archive of the RUECB.

[14] Savinsky, Part I, p. 313

[15] *Kratkii katekhezis ili izlozhenie veroispovedaniia russkikh baptistov* [Short Catechism, or Confession of the Russian Baptists, that is, of those who have been baptized according to their faith] (Archive of the RUECB).

[16] The documents mention also some co-authors writing with Ryaboshapka.

[17] This was the law issued by the administration of Alexander II that partly legalized Baptists in Russia. See chapter 1 of this thesis.

[18] See F.C. Conybeare, *Russian dissenters* (Harvard, Harvard Theological Studies X, 1921), pp. 289-291.

the Russian Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (RUECB). Its exact date is unknown but it was probably written during the period of persecution of evangelicals in Russia in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

5. "An Explanation of the foundations of the evangelical faith" was produced in April 1880 by an exiled convicted *Stundist,* Ivan Shubsky, on board the Nizhni-Novgorod armoured cruiser in the Indian Ocean. This is not mentioned by Savinsky.[20]

6. There is a Letter-Confession by V.A. Pashkov to the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, the Orthodox Archpriest I.L. Yanishev, dated April 9, 1880. This is not mentioned by Savinsky.[21]

7. E. Grositsky's Confession (1903).[22] This document was prepared by Christian lawyers P. Friesen and I. Kyshnirov for the trial of E. Grositsky, who was convicted of heresy in Kiev. The same text was used by Ivan Prokhanov in Odessa during a similar trial in 1909.[23]

8. "Creed of the evangelical faith of the believers from St. Petersburg",[24] written by an unknown author in the period 1895-1898. This circulated within the group of evangelicals led by Pashkov.

9. A number of creeds from different congregations are compiled in the book by Bishop Aleksey.[25] Most of them were composed not by "sectarians" themselves but by local Orthodox priests who were writing reports to their superintendents. The confessions are based upon testimonies of evangelical believers compiled during investigations of sectarian

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[19] Veroispovedanie Chaplinskogo, novoobrashchennogo Russkogo Bratstva [The confession of Chaplinsky, a new convert to the Russian Brotherhood] (Archive of the RUECB).

[20] *Izlozhenie osnov evangel'skoi very, sdelannoe v aprele 1880 g. ssyl'no-katorzhnym shtundistom Ivanom Shubskim, nakhodivshimsia na kreisere "Nizhnii Novgorod" v Indiiskom okeane* (GAZhO, Zhitomir, F.1, Op.22, D.1336).

[21] Pis'mo-ispovedaniie very V.A. Pashkova rektoru S.-Peterburgskoi dukhovnoi akademii protoiereiu I.L Ianyshevu ot 9 aprelia 1880 g., [Letter-Confession by V.A.Pashkov to the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Archpriest I.L. Yanishev, dated April 9, 1880] (on microfiche, Archive of the RUECB)

[22] V.I. Iasevich-Borodaevskaia,, *Bor'ba za veru* [Fight for faith] (St. Petersburg, 1912), pp. 572-577.

[23] Savinsky, Part I, pp.314-315.

[24] 'Simvol evangel'skoi very Peterburzhskikh veruiushchikh' [Creed of the evangelical faith of the believers from St. Petersburg], from *Pashkovschina i shtundizm, Missionerskoie obozreniie,* Sept.-Oct., 1897, pp. 799-806.

[25] Alexey/Doronitsin (Bishop), *Materiali Dlia Istorii Religiozno-Ratsionalisticheskogo Dvizhenija na iuge Rossii vo Vtoroi Polovine XIX Stoletiia* [Materials for the history of the religious-rationalist movements in the south of Russia in the second part of the XIX century] (Kazan: BM BD, 1908).

activities.[26] Also, the book contains several letters of a doctrinal character found during arrests of sectarian leaders.[27]

To this list of Russian documents can be added two German doctrinal documents: the "Hamburg Confession", deriving from the work of the German Baptist leader, Johann Oncken, dated 1847,[28] and the "Confession of the Mennonite Brethren Congregation in Russia", dated 1902.[29]

Although each of these documents took shape in particular circumstances, and it is not my intention to play down their distinctive characteristics, nonetheless it is possible to note some common features of the documents which help in understanding overall theological aims.

2. General characteristics of the early confessions

First of all, several early confessions are apparently based upon the 1847 "Hamburg Confession" (or Catechism, as it is sometimes known). Johann Oncken, together with his colleague Julius Köbner, first wrote this for the Hamburg city authorities in 1837. [30] Then the German Baptists as well as the German-speaking Mennonites in the southern parts of the Russian Empire accepted it as their confession in 1847.[31] Similarities can be observed in the form, style and chapter order of some of the Russian statements when compared to this document. Oncken's *opus* was divided into a number of small chapters devoted to particular issues of Christian doctrine. It is arranged as a collection of doctrinal statements each supported by a number of Bible quotations. The order of the chapters in the Hamburg Confession is the following: 1. God's Word; 2. God; 3. Sin; 4.Atonement; 5. Predestination; 6. Instruments of Grace; 7. Conversion of sinners; 8. Baptism; 9. Communion; 10. God's

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[26] E.g. Confession of Baptists from Skotovaty village (Ekaterinoslav province), recorded by P. D.Vaselkovsky on 28 May 1897. See ibid., pp. 520-527.

[27] For example, the letters of Sazon Kapustinsky (a companion of Ratushny) to Baptists in Lyubomirka (Ibid., pp. 513-514).

[28] Translated as 'Baptistskiie katakhezis i obrady' [Baptist catechism and rites] (Archive of the RUECB).

[29] Savinsky, Part I, p. 314. This confession is not considered in the present work since it did not influence the confessions of the ECB in the Russian language. Savinisky put this confession into the general list because at the time he was writing his survey the Mennonites were a part of the AUCECB.

[30] G.K. Parker, *Baptists in Europe: History & Confessions of Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1982), p. 56. For Köbner see Erich Geldbach, 'Julius Köbner's contribution to Baptist Identity', in I.M. Randall, T. Pilli and A.. Cross, eds., *Baptist Identities* (Milton Keynes, Paternoster, 2006), pp. 63-76.

[31] Ibid., p. 57.

Church; 11. Sanctification; 12. God's Law (this section included paragraphs about the celebration of Sunday); 13. Christian Marriage; 14. Civil Order; 15. The Second Coming of Christ.[32] This order, with slight variations, was later followed by virtually all the significant doctrinal documents of the AUCECB's predecessors as well as in the final AUCECB Confession of 1985. The Hamburg Confession was translated into Russian by Vasiliy A. Pavlov in 1876. Before that, the Hamburg material can be found in Ratushny's "Dogma". It seems that many believers were familiar with Oncken's Confession long before it appeared in Russian, though they never read its original text. This Confession was considered by Baptists as an outline of the message they were called to preach.

The *kerygmatic* character of these doctrinal documents is a typical feature of all confessions, but the form taken varies. Often the documents were built on the principle of an implied or implicit dialogue, as was the case explicitly with catechisms. These documents look like a set of answers to certain questions (though these questions were not indicated directly), grouped around certain topics. The order of paragraphs/chapters in those documents could be quite random. A few confessions did not have a formal structure, notably the personal confessions of Chaplinsky and Shubskoy. The language of such documents is far from Oncken's official style. Rather, these personal confessions read more like a private conversation with someone who wants to understand the essence of the new evangelical movement and potentially could be one of the new converts. Early confessions produced by those who were largely uneducated and were certainly untrained in theology typically included poetic expressions, multiple metaphors and allegories of a folklore type, and imitation of a dialogue. For example, Shubskoy includes mockery of the practice of the sign of the cross in Orthodoxy, calling it *rukomakhaniye* ("hand-waving"). Of course, the style depended on the author. Pashkov's Letter-Confession, written in good literary Russian, reveals the author's high level of education, though it still sounds like a personal conversation. Perhaps the document in this selection sounding least like a creed is the paper "Invitation for a man to come to God", presented in Bishop Aleksey's book.[33] It is simply an evangelistic tract, which contains a step-by-step account of evangelical convictions. The aim was to set out the gospel, as evangelicals understood it.

The colloquial nature of the first confessional texts was a consequence of their practical orientation. This feature is not as evident in Ratushny's "Dogma", but is notable in

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[32] Ibid., pp. 57-75.

[33] Alexiy/Doronitsin (Bishop), *Materiali Dlia Istorii Religiozno-Ratsionalisticheskogo Dvizheniia na Iuge Rossii vo Vtoroi Polovine XIX Stoletiia* [Aericles for the history of the religious rationalist movement in the south of Russia in the second part of the XIX century], pp. 511-513.

Molokan documents such as those of the Tambov subgroup[34] and the Don River subgroup (including the personal confession by Zakharov).[35] The authors of the Molokan creeds explain how their faith affirms orthodox Christian teaching, but they also seek to show how in their practice they differ from Russian Orthodoxy. The main emphasis is on the forms of worship and related ceremonies which they affirmed. For example, the Confession of the Third Tambov subgroup from Novo-Vasiliyevka[36] has just one theological statement, which repeats virtually word-for-word the Apostles' Creed. The next six statements contain information concerning the daily life of the congregation. Thus, the second point of the Confession is an extended description of the order to be used at a wedding. Next the authors describe baptisms and funerals, the celebration of holidays in a spiritual way, and the ordering of worship. It is significant that in that Confession, as well as in similar documents, very few ethical statements are to be found. Religious life seems to have been considered almost exclusively in terms of traditions and rituals.

Although there was an emphasis on evangelical distinctiveness in the early confessions, the influence of Orthodox theology is also apparent. In the Short Catechism by Ryaboshapka, "Confession of the Russian Baptists", this is very clearly stated: "We accept that everything said in the core doctrines of the Orthodox Church is true and we agree with it because it is in accord with the Holy Scriptures". In other words, the first Baptists protested not as much against the teachings of the Orthodox Church, as set out in the historic Creeds, but against what they saw as the Church's perverted practice. Their struggle with Orthodoxy

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[34] Molokans (like other Russian sects) were not united but were divided into many small subgroups or connections (*tolk*) which were usually associated with their locality (Tambov-town, Don river etc). In their turn the subgroups consisted of smaller divisions. Thus the Tambov subgroup included three independent units. Their Confessions (three in number) are kept in the State Archive of the Crimea Republic (Ukraine): 'Obuchenie v khristianskoi vere' [Instruction in the Christian faith] (TsGA Respubliki Krym, F. 26, Op.2, D. 3929, Ll. 2-9); 'Veroucheniie Vtorogo Tambovskogo i Vladimirskogo tolka presvitera Ivliia Iakovlevicha Mamontova i Danily Andreevicha Iachmeneva' [Confession of the Second Tambov and Vladimir subgroup composed by presbyters Ivlii Iakovlevich Mamontov and Danila Andreievich Iachmenev] (TsGA Respubliki Krym, F. 26, Op.2, D. 3929, Ll.10-19); 'Svedenie o verouchenii Dukhovnykh Khristian molokan, tret'iago Tambovskogo polka imenuiushchikh sekty prygunov v selenii Novo-Vasil'evki' [Information about confession of the Third Tambov supgroup named the jumpers' sect from Novo-Vasil'evka village] (TsGA Republiki Krym, F 26, op.2. D. 3929, Ll.20-21).

[35] Z.D.Zakharov, 'Kratkie pravila very khristian evangel'skogo veroispovedaniia, nazyvaemykh molkanami donskogo tolka' [Short account of rules of the Evangelical Christians called Molokans of the Second Don subgroup] (Archive of the RUECB).

[36] Compiled by N. Kolodin, *Verouchenie baptistskoi obshchiny iz molokan* [Creed of the Baptist Congregation of former Molokans] (TsGA Republiki Krym, f26, op.2, d. 3929).

did not have a theological character, partly because in basic theology there was agreement and also because in Russian Orthodox life theology did not play a very important role. The entire theology of the Russian Orthodox Church was taken from Byzantine Christianity and it was primarily limited to the statements of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, which were accepted rather than discussed. Moreover, the theology of Orthodoxy was embedded into its liturgy and was never considered seriously outside the practical ecclesial context.[37]

So when these evangelicals, who largely came from the Russian Orthodox background, thought about the core elements of their faith they simply accepted certain classic elements or statements, sometimes including some key Orthodox texts in their confessions. Some quotations from the historic creeds were made without alteration. In other cases, parts of evangelical doctrinal documents followed the traditional Orthodox creeds but they were expressed in a new way. Thus, the St. Petersburg Creed of Evangelical Christians contains the traditional text of the Nicene Creed mixed up with a typical evangelical emphasis on revival. However, while virtually all the Baptist and evangelical groups willingly affirmed the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds as expression of their faith, they (like the Orthodox Church) seldom discussed the content of those documents.

The influence of Orthodoxy can often be seen in the special emphasis given in a number of Russian evangelical confessions to questions regarding the Trinity, which was only briefly mentioned in the Hamburg Confession. But none of the evangelical confessions contain any deep analysis of Trinitarian thinking as found in Orthodox theology. Thus the first Russian evangelicals did not pay attention to the question of *filioque*, which was enormously important for the Orthodox. It is also noteworthy that the doctrinal statements to be found in the early evangelical confessions (which often followed Orthodox models), as a rule were significantly shorter than were the later expositions that were produced of renewed ecclesial practice to be found within Russian evangelical Christianity. This reinforces the interpretation that doctrine was not primary. The over-arching aim was to encourage the gospel to be embodied in evangelical communities.

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[37] See e.g. J. Anderson, *Historia de los Bautistas* (v.2, El Paso, TX: Casa Bautista de Publicaciones, 1990) p. 327. The reason for the ultimate conservatism of the Orthodox theology is the idea of static revelation. See, for example, the popular textbook on Orthodox dogma by Mikhail Pomazanskiy, *Pravoslavnoe dogmaticheskoe bogosloviie* [Orthodox dogmatic theology] (Novosibirsk: Blagovest, 1993). The author claims that the main source of the theology was direct revelation through Jesus and his apostles, so that the process of theological formation could not last too long after the apostolic period. In his opinion, theology is fixed in the Bible, the works of the Church Fathers, and especially in the liturgical rites. Liturgy here has a special significance because God addresses the Church through it (pp. 6-13).

3. Later dogmatic documents

After the stabilization of the evangelical movement in Russia in the period after the Revolution of 1905, evangelical believers shared mainly two major confessions, accepted in each of the two Unions, the Baptists and the Evangelical Christians. These were the "Confession of Christians-Baptists" produced by Vasiliy Pavlov in 1906,[38] and Ivan Prokhanov's "Exposition of Evangelical Faith, or Dogma of Evangelical Christians" (1910).[39] Also, there was an influential document written in 1913 by Ivan Kargel for the Second Evangelical Church of St. Petersburg,[40] but this was never an official confession of any particular evangelical group before WWII.[41]

Pavlov's Confession, created for the renewed Baptist Union in Russia soon after its legalization, is chronologically first in this series. Actually, it is not a new document but rather a re-edited version of the Hamburg Confession, most of the changes being of a stylistic character. The only notable theological difference consists in eliminating the point in the Hamburg statement on God's law. Also, the commandment on celebrating the Lord's Day is softened.[42] In the new document Pavlov excludes the point in the Hamburg Confession about compulsory attendance at worship services by church members every Sunday.[43]

In contrast to Pavlov's Confession, the analogous document produced by Prokhanov looks quite revolutionary. First of all, in its structure it moved away from the tradition of the

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[38] This was published as a brochure in 1906 by V. Pavlov (*Ispovedanie very khristian baptistov* (Izd. V.G.Pavlova, 1906)), and in 1928 by N. Odintsov (*Ispovedanie very khristian baptistov* [The Confession of Christian Baptists] (Leningrad: Izd. N.V.Odintsova, 1924)). The text of the document is reproduced in *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], Vyp.1/ Sostavitel S.Sannikov (Odessa: Bogomyslie, 1996), pp. 421-435. For English translation of this document see M. Dowling, 'Statement of Faith of the Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists, 1906', *American Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2004), pp.333-343.

[39] Prokhanov published this in 1910 and 1924 (*Izlozhenie evangel'skoi very, ili Verouchenie evangel'skikh khristian* [Exposition of the Evangelical Faith as represented in the Confession of Evangelical Christians] (St. Petersburg: Izdanie I.S.Prokhanova, 1910)). The text of the document is reproduced in *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], Vyp.1/ Sostavitel S.Sannikov (Odessa: Bogomyslie, 1996), pp.435-459.

[40] I.V. Kargel, *Kratkoie izlozhenie veroucheniia ievangel'skikh khristian* [Short exposition of dogma of Evangelical Christians] (Archive of the RUECB). It was reproduced in *Ispovedanie Evangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov* [Confession of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 4 (1966), p. 15. An English translation of this confession can be found in Parker, *Baptists in Europe: History & Confessions of Faith*, pp. 154-158.

[41] Victor Kouznetsov, 'A View on Russian Evangelical Soteriology: Scripture or Tradition' (M.Th. thesis, University of South Africa, 2001), p. 68.

[42] Seemingly those changes were made to suit the conditions of life of Russian peasants who could not allow themselves to miss even a day at work during the harvest.

[43] *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], pp. 431-432.

Hamburg Confession. Moreover, a polemical attitude to the prevailing Baptist doctrinal tradition can be observed. Prokhanov, on behalf of the Evangelical Christians, wanted to present the Christian faith in such a way as to replace denominationalism with Christian universality. For his theological account, Prokhanov chose a brand new strategy. In many earlier doctrinal documents, as noted above, the order of paragraphs/chapters could be quite random. Prokhanov's Confession, by contrast, is constructed in a narrative way, as if telling a detailed story of the universe from start to finish in which everything had its purpose in the mind of God. Certainly this confession focused mostly on the destiny of believers. But the implicit message was that only through participation in the universal history, which is shaped by divine purpose, do doctrinal truths gain their meaning.

Pavlov begins his Confession with a statement about the primacy of the role of the Bible in revealing God's nature and purposes, which implies that all other information in the document is based upon the authority of the Scriptures.[44] By contrast, Prokhanov first writes about God and creation.[45] He does not simply give information about what he believes to be the source of ultimate truth, but recounts the story of human beings, who at a certain moment in time received access to this source. Revelation appears only in the third chapter of the document.[46] But revelation is not limited to the Bible alone. Prokhanov writes about "internal" revelation, which consists in a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit and which is an indispensable condition for properly understanding the Bible.[47] In Prokhanov's view, the Bible's message is one way of conveying God's truth, alongside personal divine revelation, made to an individual and pointing to God's work in God's world.[48]

Pavlov accepts Oncken's Calvinistic doctrine of predestination to salvation without comment.[49] Prokhanov, by contrast, is more creative, and expands this point, dealing with it in a number of chapters. He writes, intriguingly, about God's participation – rather than his rule - in all spheres of being, including cosmic events, politics, personal history, and animal life.[50] At the same time, Prokhanov stresses the principle of the freedom of human will and people's full responsibility for their own actions.[51] He interprets God's predestination to

[44] Ibid., pp. 421-422.

[45] Ibid., pp. 436-437.

[46] Ibid., p. 437.

[47] Ibid., p. 438.

[48] Ibid., p..439.

[49] Ibid., pp. 424-425.

[50] Ibid., pp. 439-440.

[51] Ibid., pp. 446-448.

salvation as the provision of salvation, in what can be seen as a classic Arminian sense, although he does not refer to any writers in the Arminian tradition.[52]

There is much more attention paid in Prokhanov's Confession than in Pavlov to issues of sanctification. For Pavlov, sanctification is a constant struggle with residual sin which "will last all through life".[53] This viewpoint echoes traditional Calvinism. Prokhanov is more optimistic in this regard. He accepts that "it is possible to reach full freedom from sin already while living on earth".[54] The language suggests Wesleyan influence, although in the absence of any reference to Wesley this cannot be established. Good deeds are of great importance in Prokhanov's scheme, so he devotes a whole chapter to this issue. Another chapter deals with Christian freedom, which in Prokhanov's view is a highly significant aspect not only in the initial saving experience but also in sanctification. According to Prokhanov, freedom is exercised in the right way when it is directed towards love for God and other people.[55] Freedom is also the foundation for the social and political consciousness of Christians. Another aspect of sanctification stressed by Prokhanov consists in the practice of prayer, which "is a visible manifestation of contact between God and humans".[56]

At the same time, the doctrine of the church, which is a strong point in Pavlov's Confession[57] (following Oncken's Baptist ecclesiology) is to some extent unclear in Prokhanov's.[58] Thus Prokhanov speaks about three kinds of churches: universal, local, and domestic (the family).[59] Participation in the universal Church is primary, so all rules of local church organizations are open to being adapted. For example, Prokhanov was very vague about whether those presiding at communion needed special ordination for this action.[60] By contrast, Russian Baptists were quite strict about this and permitted such ministry only by ordained persons. In general, Prokhanov was indifferent about how precisely appointments to

[52] Ibid., pp. 444-445.

[53] Ibid., p. 432.

[54] Ibid., p. 445.

[55] Ibid., pp. 447.

[56] Ibid., p. 448.

[57] Ibid., pp. 428-431.

[58] This doctrine is present but its statements are not very strict. Ibid., pp. 448-450.

[59] Ibid., p. 448.

[60] Ibid., p. 450.

office in the church were to be undertaken.[61] In his opinion, pastors and deacons had no special privileges or status as compared with ordinary believers.[62]

In his Confession Prokhanov, recognizing the presence of various denominations in the universal church,[63] consistently calls for interdenominational dialogue, while at the same time arguing for the preservation of the independence of every local congregation. The interdenominational character of this 1910 document was quite challenging for those with a Baptist background. It was not that Prokhanov was proposing an alternative form of ecclesial life to the Baptist form. Rather he ignored many practical issues of church life such as the election of ministers, formal membership in local churches, church hierarchy, order to be followed in excommunication, which were described in detail in Pavlov's Confession.[64]

In spite of such differences, the two documents hold much in common. In different ways both documents proposed a version of evangelical Christianity based upon the idea of personal conversion and strict holiness, although Prokhanov leaves more room for an interdenominational vision.[65] In 1913, when Ivan Kargel wrote a confession for his congregation in St. Petersburg, he was in part attempting to achieve a compromise between Pavlov and Prokhanov. In its composition it follows the model of the Hamburg Confession but it absorbs many ideas and formulations from Prokhanov's text. At the same time, Kargel's work never pretended to be the basis for a complete reconciliation between the doctrinal documents confessed by Baptists and Evangelical Christians. Rather, it can be seen as a draft for a possible comprehensive confession. The aim in this period of Russian evangelical life, as in the previous period, was to outline the central message of the evangelical faith.

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[61] A specific feature of Russian Baptists was that there were three formal offices in the church: presbyters, teachers, and deacons. Prokhanov does not identify teachers. He recognizes the possibility of various kinds of ministries, equal in their rights.

[62] Ibid., p. 450. See also I.S. Prokhanov, *O vozlozhenii ruk i rukopolozhenii: Zapiska I. S. Prokhanova k 3-mu Vserossiiskomu S"ezdu Evangel'skikh Khristian* [About laying on of hands and ordaining: an address of I.S. Prokhanov to the 3rd All-Russian Congress of Evangelical Christians] (St. Petersburg: T-vo "Raduga", 1911), pp. 5-17.

[63] *Istoriia Baptizma* [History of Baptists], Vyp.1, p. 449.

[64] Ibid., pp. 428-429.

[65] Prokhanov wrote: 'There can be many local churches and they may differ sufficiently in their forms, their orders, and their interpretation of certain places of the Holy Scriptures, though they still belong to the same Christ.' (Ibid., p. 449).

c. Doctrinal articles in *BV*

In the publications of the AUCECB, despite what might be the expectations - taking into account the Calvinistic commitment of Pavlov, the creative thinking of Prokhanov, and the concerns of Kargel - doctrinal articles were not very frequent. Today's Russian Baptist investigators are quite often disappointed when trying to find definite answers to many important doctrinal questions. It seems that the authors of *BV* tried to avoid being too concrete in formulating their doctrine. This is quite understandable in light of the fact that the Union, in absorbing the different traditions of virtually all evangelicals in the territory of the USSR, had often to make compromises. Because any theological discussion was potentially a source of conflict, it was welcomed by neither the authorities nor the leadership of the AUCECB. As a result, theological issues appeared in AUCECB publications only when there was a real reason for it. The main motivation for raising theological issues was engaging in polemics with those whose doctrinal ideas were threatening the unity of the ECB organization. Over 90% of all the theological material in *BV* is concentrated in articles which are aimed to warn readers about the dangers of false teachings. These articles need to be considered in more detail.

1. Polemical articles: Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy

The two main Christian traditions with which *BV* engaged in a polemical way were Pentecostalism and Orthodoxy, particularly Pentecostalism. There were criticisms of other groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-Day Adventists, but these were not extensive.[66] Theological criticism of Pentecostals was an important dimension of the theological aim in the pages of *BV*, which represented a new development when compared with the previous doctrinal statements. This debate occupied more space in the periodical than any other doctrinal debate. The reason for such attention is easy to explain. The Pentecostals were the evangelical group that differed most significantly from the main body of Baptistic believers, not only in their doctrine but also in their practice. For the AUCECB it was always very painful that they were forced to absorb and control the Pentecostals, who were forced to obey, with both sides suffering because of such coexistence. The attacks by AUCECB leaders on Pentecostals increased because of their anxiety to protect their own

[66] *BV* published two articles against Jehovah's Witnesses ('Lzheucheniie Iegovistov' [False teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses], *BV*, vol. 3 (1958), p. 75 and R.K. (Editorial board), 'Zabluzhdenie Svidetelei Iegovy' [The delusions of Jehovah's Witnesses], *BV*, vol. 4 (1971), p. 71). Both the articles are anonymous. Neither Jehovah's Witnesses nor Adventists usually read the journal. AUCECB members did not want a confrontation with these groups, who shared with them the fate of religious minorities.

flock, which they saw could be affected by Pentecostal propaganda. So the authors of *BV* produced anti-Pentecostal articles fairly frequently. Their goal was, first of all, to warn true Baptists about any possible heresy and, secondly, if possible, to convince the Pentecostals. The most alarming doctrinal question for AUCECB leaders was the question of the precise nature of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Disagreement over this issue was a bone of contention between Baptists and Pentecostals, and articles of a doctrinal nature in *BV* were mostly devoted to this topic.

In fact debate and polemical exchange with Pentecostals gave rise to the tradition of doctrinal publications in *BV*. In issues 2 and 3 of *BV* in 1945 (that is, before the Pentecostals joined the AUCECB) the editors reproduced an article by Kargel "Talks about the Holy Spirit",[67] quite clearly in preparation for the forthcoming conversations with the Pentecostals, for which it was ideally suited. On the one hand, it contained no criticism of anyone, but on the other, it firmly promoted a vision of the person and work of the Holy Spirit that was acceptable to Baptist communities. For example, Kargel interprets the words in Act.1:8, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you", by first analyzing the meaning of the word "power", explaining what power is not (in this he is quite similar to Pentecostal rhetoric),[68] and then indicating that the kind of power meant in this verse is the kind the disciples gained after the experience of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.[69] Through the Spirit they received powers which they did not have before. In Kargel's opinion, these are the ability successfully to carry out Christian mission, the skill to convict and convince others, and an extraordinary improvement in their conduct among others.[70] He does not mention the contested issues of speaking in tongues or claiming miracles, both of which created tensions between Baptists and Pentecostals. At the same time, his arguments are clearly being used to seek to demonstrate the rightness of the Baptist point of view.[71]

In the article "Holy Spirit" by K.S.,[72] published in *BV* in 1948, it is possible to observe continuing dialogue with Pentecostals. The author, probably Moldavian pastor K. Sedletsky, who later became an AUCECB superintendent in Moldova, tries to point to the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of all believers even if they do not feel this presence. His strategy consists in denying the value of manifestation of the Holy Spirit *a*

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[67] I.V. Kargel, 'Besedy o Sv'atom', *BV*, vol. 2 (1945), p. 12, *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), p. 20.

[68] Ibid., p. 21.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[71] Ibid., pp. 15-22.

[72] The work was published in *BV*, vols. 3, 4, 6 (1948).

posteriori – that is, as a result of experience. The Holy Spirit in his opinion is not a source of any specific sense experience but rather an integral part of Christian spiritual formation. He exhorts his readers to "understand the responsibility of believers", who are already "members of the spiritual body of Christ"[73] and, who hence - perhaps (it seems) without knowing it - have fully obtained the Holy Spirit.

The importance of pneumatology can be seen in the fact that Yakov Zhidkov, AUCECB president, placed an article on this topic in the first issue of the journal after the publication break of 1949-1952. It seems that this article, entitled "About the Holy Spirit"[74], summarises the experience of discussions in which he had engaged with his Pentecostal opponents during these years, mainly about mass glossolalia and ecstasy during their worship meetings. The central thrust of his article consists in an affirmation of the quiet and peaceful character of spiritual manifestations. Thus, the author points to the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, a symbol of peace and quietness, during Christ's baptism,[75] reminding his readers of the revelation of God to Elijah in "a still small voice" (1Kings 19:12).[76] Zhidkov insists that genuine manifestations of the Spirit can be seen only in such things as the "fruit of the Spirit", as mentioned in Gal 5:19-21. He calls his readers "to look at fruit trees which bring forth their fruit without a sound."[77] This illustration shows that "the fruit of the Spirit expresses itself not so much in our words or feelings as in our deeds, in the kindness of our character."[78]

Almost the same arguments appear in Zhidkov's next *BV* article about the Holy Spirit, an article devoted to the celebration of Whit Sunday in 1955.[79] Zhidkov insists that the Holy Spirit is present in the life of believers from the moment of their conversion and this presence

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[73] K.S., 'Dukh Sv'atoi' [The Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 48.

[74] Y.I.Zh. (Y.I Zhidkov), 'O Dukhe Sv'atom', *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), p. 10.

[75] The dove was a popular symbol of a peaceful life during the post-war years in the USSR. The symbol was borrowed by Soviet ideologists from the famous painting of Pablo Picasso. So the image used by Zhidkov was not only limited to the religious sphere. See S. Nekhamkin, 'Golubi moskovskogo festifal'a' [Doves of the Moscow Festival], in *Argumenty Nedeli*, 11 Feb. 2007. In the mind of Zhidkov peace and quietness are synonyms.

[76] Zhidkov explains that the revelation of God to Elijah in such a quiet way is a result of God's desire to show the "violent" prophet the true character of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament parallel is noted: Luke 9:51-56. Here Jesus stops the aggressive plans of the apostles with the words "you do not know of what Spirit you are" (Luke 9:55 in the Synod Version based on the Majority Text).

[77] Y.I.Zh. (Y.I. Zhidkov), 'O Dukhe Sv'atom' [About the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 1(1953), p. 13.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Y.I.Zh. (Y.I. Zhidkov), 'O Dukhe Sv'atom' [About the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 8. This article is completely independent from the previous one published in 1953.

is to be observed in the good conduct of Christians. Here Zhidkov confronts and rebukes his opponents: "We have to warn believers in the Lord against the perversions of some people who call themselves believers: they come to a frenzy of shouting in their prayers to God: "Give, give, give!"… Such shouting ecstatic prayers can lead people to nervous breakdowns and illnesses with symptoms such as gibbering." In other words, Zhidkov spurns "speaking in tongues" ("gibbering") completely, but his argument relies on common sense rather than on delivering critical interpretations of biblical texts. However, certain key biblical texts are the basis of the Pentecostal doctrines. This is another example of the relative lack of interest among many AUCECB leaders in doctrinal formulation.

An elaborate doctrine of the Holy Spirit was formulated, however, in articles in *BV* in the 1960s by A. Karev - "The Holy Spirit"[80] and "Thoughts about the Holy Spirit."[81] These articles propose a system of statements and arguments that was to become a powerful polemical tool for use in debate with the Pentecostals for many years. First, Karev proposes the thesis that acceptance and reception of the Holy Spirit is a single event that cannot be separated from baptism with the Holy Spirit; this acceptance occurs during the event of conversion. To explain the biblical episodes when the Holy Spirit descended on those who had already been converted (as in Acts 8:14-17), Karev distinguishes between the initial baptism with the Spirit and recurrent filling with the Spirit. In this way, he puts a barrier in the way of Pentecostals who preached "Spirit baptism" as a special event. Moreover, Karev tries to limit debates about the Holy Spirit. Relying upon passages such as John 16:14, he claims that "the Holy Spirit leads us to the closest fusion with Christ",[82] and, therefore, "a person who speaks much about the Holy Spirit but not about Christ is not filled with the Spirit."[83] Concerning the question about concrete manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, Karev supports the opinion of Zhidkov that the work of the Holy Spirit consists in sanctification. At the same time, he avoids a discussion of the controversial issues of speaking in tongues, prophesying, and working miracles in the churches.[84]

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[80] A.V. Karev, 'Dukh Sv'atoi' [The Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1960), p. 15.

[81] A.V. Karev, 'Mysli o Dukhe Sv'atom' [Thoughts about the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 4 (1968), p. 28.

[82] *BV*, vol. 3 (1960), p. 19.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Similar ideas can be found in a series of articles by V.S. (possibly V.S. Glukhovskii from the Pentecostal wing of the Union. Later he became a member of the AUCECB): V.S., 'Mysli o Dukhe Sv'atom' [Thoughts about the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1962), p. 10; V.S., 'Zapechetleniie i ispolnenie Dukhom Sv'atym' [Sealing and filling with the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 4 (1962), p. 52; 'Dary Sv'atogo Dukha' [Gifts of the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1962), p. 84 and in a long article 'Actions of the Holy Spirit' written by A. Mitskevich

A very unusual interpretation of the Pentecostal key notion of baptism with the Holy Spirit was contained in an article written in *BV* in 1965 by K. Somov, the author of the Bible Correspondence Course textbook on history.[85] Somov claims that the words of Jesus about baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11) should be interpreted in the light of the prophecy found in the book of Ezekiel, Ez. 47:1-6. According to Somov, the measure of "waters issued out from under the threshold of the house", described in Ez.47:1-6, has the meaning of levels in spiritual baptism: "to the ankles", "to the knees", "to the loins", and "impossible to pass through". Each such level is correlated with a certain level of sanctification.[86] In other words, baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a single event in one's Christian spiritual life (as the Pentecostals taught) but is a metaphor of a life-long process of spiritual growth. In arguing in this way, Somov was diverging from traditional AUECB teaching about Spirit baptism happening in conversion. From his point of view, the Pentecostal doctrine about the need for an additional spiritual baptism was meaningless because it was based on a literal interpretation of a literary image. Therefore, for Somov, such a doctrine cannot even be discussed.

Criticisms of Pentecostals were not limited to the question of Spirit baptism. Sometimes they also touched on details of worship practices. Many Russian Pentecostal groups had a tradition of mutual foot washing before Holy Communion. A critique of this particular tradition surfaces in the article in *BV* by A. Mitskevich, in 1954, "About foot washing."[87] Although Mitskevitch did not agree with the Pentecostals, a desire to avoid direct confrontation was evident in this article. The text was mainly devoted to a call to humility by believers, which was symbolically demonstrated by Jesus in the act of washing his disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). The symbolic character of this action is taken for granted. Mitskevich supports the spiritualised understanding of this passage with just a few sentences: "Christ clearly said: 'The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing'[88]… Why then should we

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('Deistviia Sv'atogo Dukha' [Actions of the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1969), p. 34; *BV*, vol. 4 (1969), p. 37; *BV*, vol. 5 (1969), p. 41.

[85] K.V. Somov, 'Krescheniie Dukhom Sv'atym' [Baptism with the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1965), p. 23.

[86] For Somov, sanctification, as practically the only manifestation of the Holy Spirit, did not require discussion or defence.

[87] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Ob omovenii nog' [About foot washing], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1954), p. 8.

[88] John 6:63.

interpret this example of greatest self-humiliation literally, since "flesh counts for nothing", that is, it has no significance for believers?"[89]

On the pages of *BV* there were also debates with the Orthodox Church, although these were infrequent. One example of the type of discussion that took place with Orthodox Christians is found in the article by V. Fadiukhin, "Baptism of adults",[90] in which the author, perhaps rather curiously in view of the title, pays special attention to the issue of infant baptism. This issue was important because of the common Orthodox practice of baptising infants and the need for evangelicals who converted from the Orthodox tradition to address this practice. In popular opinion, the baptism of infants in an Orthodox church secured salvation in the case of the sudden death of a child. Leaders of ECB churches, considering this custom superstitious, fought against it. The author demonstrates good knowledge of Orthodox doctrine and history. His argumentation includes not only biblical material but also many quotations by early Orthodox writers proving that even in the Orthodox tradition the baptism of believing adults is preferable. In his opinion, infant baptism is dangerous because it weakens the efforts of parents to lead their children to true conversion, which is the only way of salvation. It is interesting that the author did not answer the question: what happens to children who die before conversion?[91] Theological debates were certainly present in *BV*, and some creative work was done, but there was no desire for theological rigour.

2. Finding a theological identity

Alongside the polemical agenda in *BV*, an interest in specific doctrinal questions can be observed in publications of the earliest period of the AUCECB, from 1945 to 1949, the time when the Union leadership was looking for a basis for the doctrinal unity of the churches within the new denomination. So *BV* served as a vehicle to test out new ideas. In the publications of that time there is evidence of the presentation of certain elements which potentially could have been used as a foundation stone for the doctrinal unity of all the groups inside the ECB Union. But all such efforts to find a solid ground for the doctrinal identity

[89] Mitskevich, 'Ob omovenii nog' [About foot washing], p. 11.

[90] Ibid., pp. 12-15.

[91] The author encountered an insoluble (for that time) dilemma. He could not admit salvation without conversion, but he could not tell parents that their children whom they lost through early death would go to hell. This would be too cruel. The problem was unsolved for many years. It was more or less solved only after the tragedy of Beslan (1 Sept. 2004), when Union leaders expressed the doctrine of the salvation of all children even without repentance. Nevertheless, this opinion was not commonly accepted even then.

were limited in scope, and were hampered by the strict limitation imposed by the government on church activities.

For example, belief in the baptism of believers was a point of agreement between all the churches in the AUCECB, but there were problems in how the belief was applied, for example in the case of the baptism of young people, because of state pressure. In 1946 the editorial board published a noteworthy article by the president of the Union, Yakov Zhidkov, with the title "Our water baptism".[92] The article considers issues concerning both the theology and practice of baptism. Zhidkov develops his article by suggesting that there are three kinds of baptism:

(a) baptism with the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11) which consists of repentance under the impact of the Spirit;[93]

(b) baptism with fire (Mt. 3:11), which consists in "burning the sins in our life";[94]

(c) baptism in water.[95]

The first two baptisms are reviewed only briefly. They are apparently presented in order to remind Pentecostal readers of the regulations set out in the August Agreement in 1945. The third option, water baptism, is examined in detail. In general, Zhidkov presents a standard doctrine of baptism which was shared by all Baptist and Evangelical Christian churches. But some of his points would have appeared rather unusual in previous periods of Baptist history. The points were as follows:

1. Baptism is a sign of spiritual maturity and, therefore, only a few believers proven to be faithful disciples of Jesus are worthy of being baptized. At the very least, the person who is baptized cannot be less than 18 years old (Christ himself was baptized at the age of 30).[96]

2. Baptism should be administered only in the summer to avoid colds. Baptising people in ice-holes (which was in the tradition of Russian Orthodoxy) is an evidence of spiritual pride.[97]

3. Baptism should be administered in solitary places. "Our testimony about Christ for non-believers consists not in baptism but in our Christian life" (Mt. 5:16).[98]

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[92] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Nashe vodnoie krescheniie' [Our water baptism], *BV*, vol. 5 (1946), p. 25.

[93] Ibid., p. 25.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., p. 26.

[96] This was the norm in the Soviet Law on religious organizations: V.A. Kuroedov, *Religiya i cerkov' v sovetskom obshchestve* [Religion and the church in the Soviet society] (2-e izd., dop., Moscow: Politizdat, 1984), pp. 128-133.

[97] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Nashe vodnoie krescheniie' [Our water baptism], p. 28.

The restrictions listed in the article by Zhidkov limited quite drastically the possibilities of churches practising baptism and prevented the use of baptism for evangelistic purposes. The efforts of the author to fit the doctrine to the ideology and legal norms of the atheistic state, where evangelism was a crime, are obvious. Naturally, this approach was not going to appeal to all evangelical believers.

In 1947, doctrinal discussion in *BV* was further stimulated by a short anonymous piece on the Lord's Supper. Despite the fact that aspects of the practice of communion had been a matter of dispute between Evangelical Christians and Baptists at the beginning of the twentieth century,[99] *BV* had not previously paid any serious attention to this rite.[100] The article "The Lord's Supper"[101] considers the issue, seeking to rely solely on the authority of the Bible. A list of biblical quotations and references is presented at the beginning and includes Mt. 26:26-2, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Cor. 11:23-26.[102] The author obviously tried to find a formula that would neither confront nor openly support any previous doctrines held by different groups of Russian evangelicals. After discussing these biblical passages (especially 1 Cor. 11:23-26), the author claims that the primary significance of communion consists in "testifying to the fact that we are reconciled with God through the death of his Son."[103] In other words, the Lord's Supper is needed to re-confirm the faith of a Christian. The article demands regular reconfirmation of the church membership of a Christian by participation in communion. Such a point of view had the potential to reduce membership in local churches if there were those members who did not take communion regularly, and, thus, it was in accord with the government's policy to limit church growth.[104] Ideology again enters the territory of theology. At the same time, the author does not deny other meanings traditionally attached to communion,[105] though he unconditionally rejects any

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[98] Ibid.

[99] The discussion concerned issues of open and closed forms of conducting Communion. Evangelical Christians allowed non-members of the local church to participate. Baptists insisted on conducting communion services only at closed meetings, for members - who had been baptized.

[100] Regulations of the Union of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists published in *BV*, vol. 1, 1945, mention the issue of the Lord's Supper (point 10), but this discussion only concerned its outer form and did not touch on its doctrinal essence.

[101] 'Vecher'a Gospodn'a' [The Lord's Supper], *BV*, vol. 3 (1947), p. 9.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., p. 11.

[104] In certain communities even one absence from communion led to excommunication.

[105] Actually, he repeats six meanings of the Lord's Supper found in Prokhanov's creed: a sign of Christ's death, the nurturing of spiritual relationship with Christ, an underlining of dependence of believers on

idea of the actual transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. He writes: "We must recognize that the Scriptures do not ascribe to the bread and wine any special power such as that which some people think they gain. The great blessing to one who participates in the Lord's Supper consists… in the joyful obedience of the believer to the Lord himself."[106]

Issues of *BV* in 1948-1949 were rich with doctrinal materials reprinted from old evangelical journals. Many more theological articles were published in those years than in the preceding and subsequent years. Doctrinal publications climaxed in an article under the title "Dogmatic talks", which reproduced Prokhanov's Confession.[107] This was clearly a proposal for a unified doctrine for the AUCECB, which was seen by ECB leaders as necessary, especially as a powerful tool in arguments with their opponents. The approval of this document, which would delineate official doctrinal insights, was seen as a logical step in the process of completing the unification of local churches of the AUCECB. The publication of discussion about different doctrinal points of view in the pages of *BV* prepared the ground for such a move. But Union leaders seem not to have dared to take this final step of publishing an agreed confession, being fully aware of its unpredictable consequences in such a heterogeneous denomination. At that time doctrinal unity was apparently not reached, and no official statement of doctrine for the AUCECB was accepted at that time.

In subsequent years the interest in theological questions visibly declined. It was quite clear that in the 1950s and early 1960s the AUCECB was focused on problems of congregational survival. Debates within the Russian evangelical community reflected the difficult wider context. The question about the character of Gospel proclamation by the church was a live one in this period. While leaders of the Pentecostals, and later of the CCECB,[108] insisted that such proclamation should be active, involving preaching in public places and the initiation of other public campaigns, which were illegal in the USSR, the representatives of the AUCECB proposed a way of carrying out evangelistic proclamation through personal holiness, quietness, and kind deeds. Such articles as Nikolai Levindanto's "Piety of local churches or church discipline"[109] and A. Karev's "Local church"[110] proposed a

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the crucified and resurrected Saviour, participation of believers in Christ's death, the union of believers under the head of Christ, the anticipation of future joy, and perfection in God's kingdom.

[106] 'Vecher'a Gospodn'a' [The Lord's Supper], p. 10.

[107] 'Dogmaticheskiie besedy' [Dogmatic talks], *BV*, vol. 3 (1948), p. 35; *BV*, vol. 4 (1948), p. 25.

[108] The breakaway Council of Churches of the ECB.

[109] N.A. Levindanto, 'Blagochiniie pomestnykh tserkvei ili tserkovnaia distsiplina' [Piety of local churches or church discipline], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 10.

thorough doctrine of such a "quiet" church. Although the laws of the Communist state apparently influenced the ecclesiology of the AUCECB, the idea of "quiet worship" was attractive to the leaders of the Union even without any external pressure.

d. AUCECB doctrinal statements

1. From the 1960s to the 1980s

The only doctrinal statement produced before the meeting of the AUCECB Congress of 1966 was three years earlier, when the "Seven Principles of Baptists", accepted by the BWA, was endorsed by the AUCECB.[111] This set out principles which were so general that they could not produce any dissent in the Union. A serious attempt to produce a more comprehensive doctrinal statement took place during the 1966 AUCECB Congress, a congress which was to lead the Union to stabilization. The Congress was the first meeting of delegates from all parts of the ECB Union since Stalin's death and was devoted to seeking to deal with the consequences of the 1960 Dissent. Doctrinal unity became part of the general agenda, which was aimed at the restoration of the Union. During the Congress Karev claimed that: "The doctrinal statement of Evangelical Christians-Baptists … will help churches in the brotherhood to prosper."[112] He presented the need for a doctrinal document as a response to the call which the General Secretary of the BWA, Arnold T. Ohrn, issued ten years earlier.[113] Karev and his companions did not create anything new, since in those circumstances any new doctrinal statement could have provoked an avalanche of criticism. Instead, they proposed the use of Ivan Kargel's Confession of 1913 as the official confession of the denomination.[114] The aim was to find theological stability by reaching back to the past.

The choice was made, and ratified, because of the conciliatory character of the document and its universal recognition among the churches. At the same time, it was quite clear that Kargel's Confession was too general and too short to play the role of a theological identifier for the whole Union. There is no evidence of serious work on more substantial doctrinal discussions within the AUCECB till the end of the 1970s. In *BV* there were only

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[110] A.V. Karev, 'Pomestnaia tserokov' [The local church], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 19.

[111] These principles, with commentaries, can be found in the article "General principles of Evangelical Christians – Baptists" written by A. Mitskevich, *BV*, vol. 1 (1966), p. 44.

[112] 'Doklad general'nogo sekretaria VSEKhB A.V.Kareva' [Report of General Secretary of the AUCECB A.V.Karev], *BV*, vol. 6 (1966), p. 15, pp. 22-23.

[113] Letter from Arnold T. Ohrn, 16 January 1956 (Archive of the RUECB).

[114] 'Doklad general'nogo sekretaria VSEKhB A.V.Kareva' [Report of General Secretary of the AUCECB A.V.Karev], *BV*, vol. 6 (1966), pp. 22-23.

some isolated articles devoted to certain aspects of systematic theology.[115] Although these articles consider very different aspects of theology, from the nature of God to questions of predestination and of eschatology, their common trait is that they are written from the perspective of the need for spiritual revival and propose to readers certain practical consequences of the doctrinal statements. Also, it is significant that the distinction between notions of "doctrine" and "biblical teaching" is blurred in those articles. Any doctrinal statement was considered as arising directly from the biblical text and was seen as inseparable from practical spirituality.[116] Doctrinal articles, if they appeared at all, read much like devotional texts.

An important event was the appearance of the book *Dogmatika* [Dogmatics] by A. Bichkov, which served as a textbook for the Bible Correspondence Courses that were started in 1968. The book did not appear as a separate edition but was published in a series of articles in *BV*. The text was a close translation of a book by the American author, William Evans, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, first published by Moody Press in Chicago in 1912. Although some authors, like Sawatsky, call this text "the official teaching" of the Union,[117] its role was, in reality, much more modest. Bichkov (in a personal conversation)[118] said that he chose this text rather randomly. The book was found in the personal library of one of the members of the Moscow Baptist Church. Since the leaders of the Council did not have many theological books available, after a short consultation Bichkov decided to translate Evans' work and use it for educational purposes. Since he could not reveal the real author's name because of censorship he signed the text as if it was his own. Although this text was used in the Bible Correspondence Courses it was never considered an official AUCECB confession. It was simply one book among many others. The problem was that the other books used were not

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[115] For example, I. Motorin, 'Ucheniie Biblii o Boge '[The Bible's Teaching about God], *BV*, vol. 1 (1960), p. 60; A.V. Karev, 'Lichnost' Iisusa Khrista (dogmaticheskii etud)' [The Person of Jesus Christ (a doctrinal study)], *BV*, vol. 4 (1962), p. 69; 'Chto govorit Bibliia (glavnyie doktriny biblii)' [What the Bible says (main doctrines of the Bible)], *BV*, vol. 1 (1964), p. 55; K.V. Somov, ' Mysli o Khriste' [Thoughts about Christ], *BV*, vol. 1 (1963), p. 65; *Dukh Sv'atoi* [Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1963), p. 14; A. Mitskevich, ' Vtoroie prishestviie Khrista i sud nad zhivuschimi lud'mi' [The Second coming of Christ and the judgment of all living people], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 51; S.P. Fadiukhin, ' Ispovedaniie nashei very' [Confession of our faith], *BV*, vol. 5 (1970), p. 45.

[116] This can be observed very clearly, for instance, in the article 'Questions of believers', A.V. Karev, 'Voprosy veruiuschikh' [Believers' questions], *BV*, vol. 3 (1966), p. 17, in which Karev presents doctrinal issues through interpreting passages from the Bible.

[117] Sawatsky, p. 351.

[118] Interview with A. Bichkov, 3 November 2008.

translated into Russian and were not accessible except to a narrow circle of educated Union leaders. It is also the case that Evans, who was greatly influenced by the evangelist D.L. Moody and became Director of Bible Studies at the Moody Bible Institute, articulated central evangelical beliefs.

The work of writing a doctrinal statement was resumed some time before the AUCECB congress in 1979 as part of a campaign to intensify the work on the unification of Soviet evangelicals.[119] The All-Union Council's executive board appointed a special committee with the superintendent of Ukraine, Yakov Dukhonchenko, as its chair, and A. Bichkov, O. Tärk, and M. Zhidkov as its members. This committee prepared a draft of the new doctrinal statement and this was published in *BV* for open discussion.[120] Unfortunately, no materials from the work of this committee are preserved in the RUECB Archive (apparently they were burnt during the move to the new building in 1994). So the published draft and materials of Congresses in 1979 and 1985 are the main sources of information on the topic. It is known that after the Congress of 1979 the new Doctrinal Statement was discussed during the Plenary sessions of the leaders of the AUCECB in 1981 and 1984.[121] Eventually the Statement was approved by a vote during the Congress of 1985. Dukhonchenko summed up the result of this activity in the following words: "The Committee considered all notes and proposals regarding the Doctrinal Statement … The Committee agreed to shorten the text of the Statement and to eliminate unnecessary details. Also all notes were studied attentively and accepted, except those which resembled private opinions."[122] The document that appeared after the Congress presented the results of the theological development of ECB during all the previous years and now needs to be considered in more detail.

2. The Statement of Faith of 1985

The first impression after reading the Doctrinal Statement of 1985 (at least if the reader is familiar with the longer history of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists) may well be one of surprise. Many things, in terms of the form of the Statement and also its content, are quite

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[119] It is important to take account of the weakened condition of the AUCECB after Karev's death. The leadership of the Union had lost all links to the CCECB, while autonomous churches were quite reluctant to join the official Union.

[120] 'Verouchenie EKhB' [The Confession of ECB], *BV*, vol. 4 (1980), p. 32.

[121] K.Y. Dukhonchenko, 'Soobshchenie o Ia.K.Dukhonchenko o verouchenii EKhB' [Report of K.Y. Dukhonchenko about the Confession of ECB], *BV*, vol. 3(1985), p. 4.

[122] Ibid.

unexpected in such a document. First of all, the Statement follows the tradition of the Hamburg Confession. It is interesting that Dukhonchenko claims that "while compiling the Statement the authors used confessions by I. Oncken, I. Kargel, I. Prokhanov, N. Odintsov as well as confessions of Baptist Unions of other countries."[123] Two texts listed here are the same: those attributed to Oncken and Odintsov are publications of the same Confession, translated and adopted for Russian Baptists by V. Pavlov. But Pavlov is not mentioned at all. Instead, there is the name of Odintsov, who simply published the latest edition of the Confession. Within the AUCECB, Prokhanov's heritage was still competing with the Baptist one, represented by Pavlov. As a pastor of the Odessa church, Pavlov had been very influential in the South of Ukraine while the Moscow leaders of the AUCECB tended to look to the tradition of Evangelical Christians. Dukhonchenko, being the superintendent of Ukraine, represented the interests of the Ukrainian part of the Union, and his wording was partly motivated by political reasons. His comments on the 1985 statement highlighted the primary importance of Prokhanov's and Kargel's Confessions, while in fact the 1985 document promoted traditional South Russian and Ukrainian Baptist visions of theology, drawn from German roots.

Following the model used by Johann Oncken, the document consists of a series of topical assertions supported by multiple Bible quotations. The links between the quotations and the assertions are not always apparent and there are no attempts to explain the connections. The major affirmations are grouped into 13 chapters which are partly reproduced from the Hamburg Confession (which had 15 chapters), and to a large extent follow this Confession in their content and order.

Like the Hamburg Confession, and the Pavlov Confession, the new Doctrinal Statement starts with a chapter about the Scriptures.[124] This chapter consists of four assertions, three of which have analogies in the Hamburg document.[125] The only new element is the statement concerning the content of the Bible: "The Bible reveals the truth, proclaims God's love and eternal life in Jesus Christ."[126] This statement is obviously meant for those

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[123] A.I. Mitskevich,, 'Soobshchenie A.I.Mitskevicha o verouchenii EKhB' [Report of A.I. Mitskevich about the Confession of ECB], *BV*, vol. 1-2 (1980), p. 42.

[124] *Evangel'skie Khristiane-Baptisty (sokhranivshie vernost' Evangeliju)* [Evangelical Christian-Baptists (those who preserved faithfulness to the Gospel] (Moscow: Protestant, 1992) (hereafter *EKhB*), pp.12-13.

[125] These assertions listed the books of the Holy Scriptures, and stated their divine inspiration and saving character.

[126] *EKhB*, p. 12.

who were inclined to consider the Bible as merely a set of historical documents – or unhistorical, as atheist propaganda had it. To some extent, this statement also argues against biblical criticism, which was known to Union leaders who had visited Western countries. At the same time, the editorial board stated that they had excluded from the Statement the assertion: "We believe that God's Word is everlasting and imperishable".[127] This statement could be seen as promoting the truth of the Bible above the reality of ultimate communion with God.

The chapter on the Bible is followed by four relatively short chapters about God, the Trinity, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.[128] Although they are short, such a detailed account of the theology of the Trinity, Christology, and Pneumatology was unique in the history of Russian evangelical confessions. At the same time, they can be considered as developing Pavlov's chapter on "God" from his Confession. An interest in the divine nature is understandable in an Orthodox context where knowledge of God was the ultimate goal of someone's spiritual journey. One feature of these chapters, however, is an absence of answers to the most frequent theological questions appearing in the dialogues with Orthodox and Pentecostal thinking. For example, the Statement does not touch the problem of *filioque*, which was crucial in the conflict between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. It does not mention the notion of "baptism with the Spirit". The assertion about spiritual gifts,[129] which contains a list of gifts, is ambiguous. It could be understood as supporting a Pentecostal understanding of the question or as contradicting it, depending on whether this list of gifts is taken as exhaustive or just a sampling.

While the theological part of Pavlov's Confession is expanded in the AUCECB Doctrinal Statement, Pavlov's anthropological and soteriological parts are merged into one disproportionally large chapter "About humankind" (number 6). This chapter is, more than any others, affected by Prokhanov's Confession. It differs from other chapters even in its style. It is designed as a story of humankind from its creation to the fall and then on to redemption and sanctification in Christ. The chapter also discusses different instruments of sanctification, including prayer and fasting. Although it represents a divergence from the Pavlov approach, this chapter forms the focal point of the whole document and exposes the main idea of the Statement: holiness as a goal. The idea is also present in previous chapters: in the assertion that the Bible is the source of "spiritual edification for believers"[130] (ch. 1), in

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[127] *Verouchenie EKhB* [The Confession of ECB], *BV*, vol. 4 (1980), p. 33.

[128] *EKhB*, pp. 13-21.

[129] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

[130] Ibid., p. 13.

pointing to the holy nature of God[131] (ch. 2), and in claiming that the primary role of the Holy Spirit consists in sanctifying believers[132] (ch. 5). But in the sixth chapter holiness appears as the ultimate purpose of human existence. So this idea sets the framework for the subsequent chapters.

After describing the nature of humanity, the authors of the Doctrinal Statement move to the chapter on the church.[133] This order is an adaptation of the Hamburg Confession where the doctrine of church came after points regarding baptism and communion. The shift in order follows the practice of the AUCECB. While in *Stundist* times sacraments were administered informally by a group of individuals, and among the Evangelical Christians there was flexibility, for the AUCECB the right to administer baptism and communion was the privilege of a church that was formally organized, with the administration of the sacraments conducted by a minister specifically appointed for these purposes.[134] Thus the sacraments were considered not as components of personal spirituality but rather as formal rites of the church.

The Doctrinal Statement distinguishes between three kinds of church: universal or ecumenical, local and family church.[135] This idea (as well as certain specific formulae in the chapter) is obviously borrowed from Prokhanov's confession, though the Statement develops the idea quite independently. The universal church is thought of as a mystical community of converted individuals.[136] Membership here does not need any documented or formal confirmation and someone can be a member of Christ's church even without having any actual community of believers around them. In the minds of the AUCECB, the universal church was obviously more important than any other ecclesiastical form. Thus it is possible to find cases of excommunication of "sinful" believers by the AUCECB even if the excommunicated persons do not even belong to their denomination. Biblical passages about the church are usually applied directly to the universal church.

The next kind of church is the local church.[137] The Statement defines its three functions: preaching the Gospel,[138] fostering believers in holiness, and "multiplication of

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[131] Ibid., p. 14.

[132] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[133] Ibid., p. 31.

[134] Ibid., p. 37.

[135] Ibid., p. 31.

[136] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[137] Ibid., p. 32.

Christian love and strengthening of unity among believers"[139]. The church order proposed by the Statement puts emphasis on strong ministerial leadership: a congregation elects the ministers who then rule the church. Pastors, according to the Statement, should be ordained by those who stand higher in the church hierarchy. At the same time, their position is not sacral in an Orthodox sense. They lose their ordination the moment they "commit a sin which leads to excommunication".[140] The Doctrinal Statement calls all believers to strong discipline and obedience to pastors, deacons, and members of the church hierarchy. Although the Statement mentions family church as one of the three, this concept is not explained and seems to appear simply as a reminder of the source of this part of the document: the confession by I. Prokhanov.[141]

The parts of the Statement on baptism and communion are similar to those in almost all historical confessions of the Russian evangelicals and there are no revolutionary theological elements in this section of the Statement. There is a detailed description of the order of baptism, as it was established in the 1960s and 1970s.[142] According to the document, participation in communion is limited to church members, as was the tradition of the former Russian Baptist Union. The open communion position of the Evangelical Christians was no longer deemed to be acceptable.[143]

For some reason, the authors of the Statement include in their document a chapter on Sunday.[144] Although this issue was part of the Hamburg Confession, in general the celebration of Sunday had very little importance in the doctrinal documents of the AUCECB's predecessors. It was completely ignored in the Confessions by Prokhanov and Kargel. The only explanation for devoting a whole chapter to the question of observing Sunday may be opposition to the Seventh-Day Adventists, who shared the same headquarters building with the AUCECB and obviously irritated the ECB leaders, though in general their

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[138] It is important to stress that the wording here is very ambiguous. The preaching here may be interpreted as proclaiming the Gospel to unbelievers. But it is quite possible to interpret this as stating the importance of the edification of believers through preaching.

[139] *EKhB*, p. 32.

[140] Ibid., p. 34.

[141] Prokhanov gave clear definitions for all three kinds of churches.

[142] *EKhB*, pp. 35-37.

[143] Ibid., p. 37.

[144] Ibid., p. 38.

promotion of high standards of holiness was very similar to that of the AUCECB.[145] In the new confession Sunday is presented not as a commandment of God but as a remembrance of Christ's resurrection, though believers are called to observe this day very vigorously.[146]

The last three chapters in the Doctrinal Statement are the same as in Pavlov's Confession: the Christian Family,[147] the Second Coming of Christ,[148] and Church-State Relations.[149] The chapter on family was important because of rules about divorce and remarriage, which mainly constitute its content. The authors of the Statement stand in a tradition which upheld lifetime marriage and forbade divorce in any form except for adultery. One issue for the AUCECB was remarriage for pastors. Some people thought that a pastor, like any other believer, had the right to remarry in the case of his spouse's death, while others followed the Orthodox tradition, according to which pastors could have just one wife in their lifetime.[150] This point is absent from the 1985 Statement, apparently to avoid arguments. It is very interesting that the new Confession made divorce between believers and unbelievers legal. This point was the most controversial and untraditional in the entire document. In spite of all criticisms, Dukhonchenko insisted on it for personal reasons. At that time his own daughter was in the process of divorcing her non-Christian spouse, so the new confession meant that she could retain her membership of the church.[151]

The chapter on the Second Coming of Christ differs from all previous documents by its advocacy of a particular eschatological view. It strictly follows the premillennial scheme of how end-time events will develop, in the spirit of the Dispensationalist tradition.[152] The future events are arranged in a strict sequence: the rapture of the Church, the great tribulation followed by the return of Christ to earth to judge humankind, the millennial kingdom of

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[145] See M.M. Kulakov, 'Seventh day-Adventists', in J. Witte, *Proselytism and orthodoxy in Russia: the new war for souls*, ed., M. Bourdeaux,Maryknoll (N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), pp. 151-163, esp. pp. 154-155. As noted, anti-Adventist polemic is largely absent in *BV*.

[146] This chapter sounds self-contradictory, probably because it has two contradictory goals. On the one hand, it argues against Adventist observance of the seventh day. On the other hand, it tries to secure weekly attendance at church in a special day. It argues for fulfillment of the fourth commandment but being understood in a "non-literal" way.

[147] *EKhB*, p. 38.

[148] Ibid., p. 39.

[149] Ibid., p. 41.

[150] This was based on a traditional reading of 1Tim. 3:2.

[151] This fact was well known in the office of the AUCECB in the 1980s. One of those who told me about this in private conversations was Walter Mitskevich, who personally participated in the meetings of that committee (Interview with Walter Mitskevich, 10 December, 2009).

[152] Ibid., p. 41.

Christ, the revolt of Satan, and the final judgment before "the Great White Throne". The premillennial position was expressed in the confession by Kargel, who was indebted to British evangelical writings.[153]

The Doctrinal Statement ends with a chapter on relationships between church and state. It is the first Russian evangelical doctrinal document that places this topic at the very end. In all other Confessions, even the most sectarian ones, relations with mainstream society were considered a more central part of Christian spirituality. In the Statement of 1985 the key idea regarding relations with the state is "we believe that the church has nothing in common with this world",[154] and the whole chapter looks like a formal and forced appendix to the account of the ECB faith.[155] It claims that "the Church confessing Christ as its head should not be placed under the domain of any secular power. It should not obtain secular power or act in its spirit or with its methods."[156] Even initial assertions about civic duties mean no more than an application of the general principle of personal holiness: "Christians are obliged to struggle with any evil in the life of society through pious life and prayer."[157]

Summing up, it can be argued that the 1985 Statement of Faith of the AUCECB does not offer any significant new theological reflection. It misses out some important questions like the question of predestination, which was explained differently in such important confessions as Pavlov's and Prokhanov's and had been a source of conflict within the older Baptist tradition. The Doctrinal Statement is not consistent in content and style and is very vague in many aspects. Moreover some of its points (such as that about divorce) served the interests of its authors. In general it seems like a compilation of differing opinions on various theological subjects, with a strong bias towards the Hamburg Confession, rather than a presentation of the complete belief system of a major Russian evangelical movement. These weaknesses serve to reinforce the argument that theological rigour was not a priority for the AUCECB.

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[153] A number of dispensationalist books can be found in 'Pashkov's library', now kept at the Moscow Theological Seminary of the ECB. On Kargel's premillennialism and the British influence see G.L.Nichols, *Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality* (Ph.D. diss., International Baptists Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2010), pp.218-222.

[154] *EKhB*, p. 40.

[155] Many notions in the chapter seem artificial. For example, there is a very vague notion of "canonical actions" which seems to be borrowed from an analogous document of the Orthodox Church.

[156] Ibid., p. 41.

[157] Ibid.

e. Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the longer history of doctrinal discussion among Russian evangelicals by looking at published documents that influenced the tradition. The documents had limited theological aims. They were mainly concerned with how to explain core evangelical beliefs as they were lived out in evangelical communities. This was the background for AUCECB publications. Evaluating the fruits of the doctrinal activities of the AUCECB in the period being examined, what is striking is the low importance attributed to theology by Soviet evangelical leaders. Reading the Bible was not done with the purpose of creating any elaborate and consistent theology. ECB leaders promoted doctrinal themes only when they needed a certain practical outcome from the theory: usually during polemical engagement with Pentecostals and the Orthodox Church and campaigns for unity. Yet at the same time there was a desire to create a theological identity. Nobody expected to reach complete theological unity. But despite the desire to understand and confess a common faith, published materials on doctrinal issues, notably in *BV*, are infrequent and inconsistent. When a confession was felt to be needed, in 1966, the work done by Ivan Kargel, published in 1913, was utilised. Absence of attention to crucial notions of the faith in the context of the USSR surely weakened the Union. The real core of ECB life, however, lies elsewhere. What was offered in theological articles seems more like training materials, an approach which certainly had its own value. Looking carefully at the Doctrinal Statement which was finally produced, in 1985, it is clear that it also has an instructive character rather than an aim to set out a coherent summary of beliefs. Indeed, it was approved during the congress with a commentary which was repeated in every publication: "accepted… as an auxiliary material for the spiritual development of believers".[158] This conclusion leads to a consideration of another aim of the publications of the AUCECB: the educational one.

Chapter 6
Educational aims

a. Introduction

One of the clearly observable aims in AUCECB publications was educational, a completely appropriate one in the eyes of all the Union leaders. Training was part of the Russian evangelical tradition. The desire for training was not simply an AUCECB leadership vision.

[158] *EKhB*, p. 12.

It was clearly expected in the churches that one of the functions of the denominational centre - the All-Union Council - should consist in providing local leaders with some kind of education. But AUCECB had no opportunity to run a seminary or even a Bible school on a correspondence basis until 1968, so materials published by the Council were designed to fill this gap. While training lay people could only be done on an informal, part-time basis within the AUCECB, because of Soviet restrictions, the AUCECB leaders knew from their own history the value of full-time theological education. Many key figures of the earlier Russian evangelical movement, such as V. Pavlov,[1] I. Kargel,[2] and I. Prokhanov[3] had trained at German or English seminaries and brought with them the idea of creating training for evangelical ministers and lay people.[4] This chapter explores the nature of the educational and training aims present especially in articles in *BV* and also in the AUCECB Bible correspondence courses which began in 1968.

b. The Concept of Christian Education in the ECB

Early evangelical communities in Russia embodied an implicit protest against what they saw as the lack of understanding of the Christian faith by Russian Orthodox lay people. It was natural, therefore, that there should be a desire to have services in evangelical churches that communicated in language that could be understood. To an extent this was an educational aim. It was not uncommon for Baptist and Evangelical Christian church members to come to worship services with their notebooks to take notes of what they heard during sermons - which were therefore expected to be didactic as much as exhortatory. The image of the worship service as a school was a traditional one for Russian evangelicals. A famous hymn by Ivan Prokhanov provides an image for such Sunday training: "I am in your invisible school sitting by your feet. My mind is expecting the living words of preachers."[5] Other forms of Christian education for lay people and for ministers were limited. However, there was always a desire to offer higher level training for pastors, preachers and music directors.

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[1] V. Pavlov studied at the German Baptist seminary.

[2] For a reference to Kargel at the German Baptist Seminary see V.M. Koval'kov, M.P. Chernop'atov, *Ivan Ven'aminovih Kargel, BV*, vol. (1979), p. 42.

[3] I. Prokhanov studied at Bristol Baptist College.

[4] In the 1950s Michael Zhidkov and Matthew Melnik were among future AUCECB leaders who studied in England, at Spurgeon's College and Bristol Baptist College respectively. W. Mitskevich and L. Tkachenko, and later I. Savieliev and A. Kozinko, also studied abroad.

[5] *Pesn' vozrozhdeniia: sbornik dukhovnykh pesen* [Song of Revival: A collection of spiritual songs] (Moscow: Protestant, 1993), p. 15.

The idea of establishing an evangelical seminary on the territory of Russia was initially discussed at the first Baptist World Congress in London in 1905. In the same year, as they considered the opportunities of the First Russian Revolution, Russian evangelicals saw the possibility of running educational projects. The first training of church ministers was organized by Prokhanov.[6] It was a short-term programme starting at the end of 1905 in St. Petersburg and repeated several times in the following years. The SaintPetersburg Bible College, a development of this training, opened in 1913 with 18 students - nine Russians, five Latvians, one Georgian, one German, one Ossetian and one Ukrainian.[7] I. Kargel was one of the principal teachers in this school, which belonged to the Union of Evangelical Christians.[8] The education of ministers of the Russian Baptist Union was provided at the Lódź Seminary of Russian German Baptists in Poland (part of the Russian Empire at that time).[9] At the All-Russian Congress of Baptists in 1909, Union leaders raised the possibility of beginning a theological seminary in Moscow, but they did not have enough money. The necessary finance was collected during the second Baptist World Congress in 1911.[10] However, the seminary was not able to start because of changes in Russian laws on the threshold of World War I.[11]

After the Communist Revolution (1917), both Evangelical Christians and Baptists set up and ran several local schools for theological training, but all of these existed for only a short time. In Moscow there were two main projects. V. Pavlov and M. Timoshenko conducted Christian training courses in 1923.[12] In 1927, building on this, the Baptist Union started a three-year study programme designed for training church ministers, with P. Ivanov-Klishnikov as director of the programme. This school was, however, closed by the authorities in 1929.[13] In Leningrad, Prokhanov directed Bible Courses for Evangelical Christians until his emigration. This institution of Prokhanov's was especially important for the AUCECB, since the AUCECB Bible Correspondence Courses employed teachers who had been shaped by Prokhanov's earlier educational work.[14]

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[6] L. Shenderovskii, *Ivan Prokhanov* (Toronto: Evangelskaya Vera, 1986), p. 109.

[7] I.S. Prokhanoff, *In the Cauldron of Russia, 1869-1933* (New York: All Russian Evangelical Christian Union, 1933), p. 168.

[8] G.L. Nichols, 'Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality' (Ph.D. diss., International Baptist Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2010), pp. 186-189.

[9] Savinsky, Part I, p.275.

[10] *Baptist World Alliance: Second Congress* (Philadelphia: Harper&Brother Company, 1911), pp. 440-441.

[11] D.H. Shubin, *History of Russian Christianity*, V. 3 (New York: Algora Pub, 2004-2006), p. 176.

[12] *HECB*, p. 214.

[13] Savinsky, Part II, pp. 106-107.

[14] Mitskevich, p. 405.

After 1929 any educational activity by either of the Unions, Baptist or Evangelical Christian, became impossible. When the AUCECB was set up, therefore, the only theologically trained people within the Union were those who had used opportunities to gain such training in the schools of the 1920s.[15] The number of such people was very small. So the AUCECB had to rely on its own resources in building a system of education and training. A crucial component in such education was writing, and *BV* was central to this dimension. There were several sources of information for authors writing educational articles in *BV*. The first source was old books. Only a few books in the library of the AUCECB survived from the time before Stalin's purges,[16] and most of these books were of a devotional character. To fill this gap, All-Union Council members purchased old books from second-hand bookshops.[17] At that time these bookshops sold religious literature at high prices, which meant that the Council members did not have the opportunity to choose and acquire everything they wanted. Usually the books available were books written by Orthodox authors,[18] were Protestant classics,[19] or were works of famous evangelical preachers translated into Russian.[20]

Secondly, a number of the students studying abroad brought some theological books back with them. Thus Mikhail Zhidkov (the son of the president of the AUCECB) collected a good library of English evangelical classics during his studies in Surgeon's College in London. [21] But the use of such books was limited because few people knew foreign languages (the books were usually in English) well enough to be able to read this kind of theological literature. The third source was books on religion published by state publishing houses. Although such books necessarily carried an atheistic bias, they contained some objective

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[15] Some believers were theologically self-taught, but this was rare because of a lack of sources for such training and lack of basic education that would allow further intellectual development.

[16] A significant part of this library consists of books donated from the private libraries of pastors. Many of them are stamped with *ex libris* of Motorin, Karev, and Zhidkov.

[17] Stamps from these stores are on books kept in the library of the AUCECB.

[18] For example, the biblical encyclopedia by Archimandrite Nikiphor, *Illiustrirovannaia polnaia populiarnaia bibleiskaia entsiklopediia* [Illustrated full popular Bible encyclopedia] (Moscow, 1891). Excerpts from this book were published in *BV* in the 1940s.

[19] For example, the works of John Bunyan and John Milton (from the catalogue of the library of the AUCECB).

[20] Some of the most popular authors were Andrew Murray, C.H. Spurgeon, J.N. Darby, C.H. Mackintosh, E. Modersohn, Oswald Smith and Watchman Nee (from the catalogue of the library of the AUCECB).

[21] Now this library belongs to his widow Lydia (living in Balashikha, Moscow Province).

information and thus selected materials from them could be used by *BV* authors. For example, official (often called scientific) publications were the only source for writing about Qumran manuscripts.[22]

The most highly valued skill amongst those for which training was sought was preaching. Pastors were primarily preachers who were also in charge of administering the church. At the same time, skilful pastoral care (or pastoral counselling) was not considered significant enough for training to be offered, or perhaps it was that they did not know what training was appropriate.[23] Choir directors were supposed to focus more on their musical skills, though usually they also had a teaching/preaching ministry in the congregation. So a training programme for AUCECB ministers had to include two parts: a general course on preaching and special courses on pastoral administration or music. This is exactly what can be observed in the pages of *BV* and later in the AUCECB's Bible Correspondence Courses. Education was first of all focused on training preachers and, secondly, it addressed certain specific questions about particular ministries in the church. The present thesis will not take into account questions of music ministry because it contributed little to the Biblical hermeneutics of the ECB.

A specific aspect of the concept of Christian education in the ECB context consisted in the belief that ministers, by comparison with members of churches, needed to be provided with certain additional biblical knowledge. The reason for this was apparent. The content of the Bible could be learned from the Bible itself, but information about Biblical background, history, geography and philology was accessible only to "experts". So the training offered through articles in *BV* and through courses implied that students would obtain something that they could not acquire from merely reading the Bible. This was an important educational aim.

c. *BV* articles and biblical education

1. Initial years of *BV*

As noted in the previous chapter, theological articles in the early issues of *BV* often addressed problems within the AUCECB, notably the question of Pentecostalism. An exception to this

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[22] R.K. (Editorial board), 'Bibleiskiie manuskripty - rukopisi'[biblical Manuscripts – hand-writings], *BV*, vol. 2 (1960), p. 57. *Redaktsionnaya Kollegiya* (Editorial board) here meant seemingly A. Karev.

[23] Thus, the word 'counselling' (*dushepopecheniie, dushepopechitel'stvo*) can be found only once in *BV* - in an article by I. Motorin addressed to pastors: I. Motorin, 'Ispolniai sluzheniie tvoio' [Carry out your ministry], *BV*, vol. 1(1948), p. 47. In this article Motorin claimed that personal counselling was one of the most important parts of the pastoral ministry (p. 47). But this theme was not pursued in publications of the AUCECB till Perestroika.

was a theological article published in 1945, but derived from an earlier era, by I. Prokhanov, entitled "Eight valleys (from biblical geography)".[24] This rather strange sermon (which is what it was) by Prokhanov is built around the usage of the word "valley" in the Old Testament. Prokhanov finds eight distinctive instances of such usage and attempts to arrange them to produce an allegorical depiction of Christian spiritual experience. In Prokhanov's scheme, Christians in their spiritual journeys pass through different valleys: from the valley of Achor (Josh. 7:24) (the valley of judgement in Prokhanov's interpretation) to the valley of Eshcol (Num. 13:23) (the valley of beatitude).[25] There are hardly any exhortations to believers in this sermon. Rather the emphasis is on gaining knowledge of the Bible, albeit through a scheme of figurative interpretation. A certain amount of "scientific" information concerning geography and linguistics is used in the article. This article's appearance in *BV* signalled the emergence of publications directed to boost biblical education among ECB ministers.

In 1947 very few spiritual/devotional articles were published in *BV* apart from those associated with Christmas, Easter, New Year and other holidays.[26] At the same time almost every issue (except no. 4, which was wholly dedicated to the history of the evangelical movement in Russia) contained several articles focusing on Bible study. The attention in these articles was directed towards personalities and localities mentioned in the Bible.[27] Such articles had two advantages: in relation to the authorities, these neutral materials were ideologically safe, and in relation to ministers they offered data which the ministers could not obtain from other sources. First, the editorial board offered its readers a series of articles from the "Bible Encyclopaedia" of Archimandrite Nikiphor, published in 1891. The articles

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[24] I.S. Prokhanov, 'Vosem' dolin (iz bibleiskoi geographii)' [Eight valleys (from biblical geography], *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), p. 39.

[25] *Dolina blazhenstv* – another possible translation is 'valley of blessings'.

[26] There were two exceptions. The first is an expository sermon by I. Motorin on the Lord's Prayer: 'Molitva Otche Nash' [Lord's Prayer], *BV*, vol. 3 (1947), p. 17. The other is a translation of an article, 'Penitence', by Henry Drummond, from the book *Ideal Life and other unpublished addresses* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), in the series of publications that started in 1946 - G.D. 'Starshii brat' [Older brother], *BV*, vol. 5(1946), p. 14 - and continued in 1948: G.D., 'Tri fakta spaseniia' [Three facts of salvation], *BV*, vol. 2 (1948), p. 26; *Svoistva liubvi* [Properties of love], *BV*, vol. 4 (1948), p. 12; 'Preobrazheniie v obraz Khrista' [Transfiguration into the image of Christ], *BV*, vol. 5 (1948), p. 12; 'Istochnik radosti' [The source of joy], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 44.

[27] The most informative articles in *BV* during the first period were either about historical personalities from ancient to recent times or about localities that were visited during the multiple trips of AUCECB representatives. The articles on the Bible had a clearly historical character.

covered geographical topics, following an alphabetical order. The publication of these articles started with *BV* issue no. 1, 1947, and suddenly stopped the next year (with no. 1, 1948), having hardly reached the end of the first half of the alphabet. Second, *BV* began an important cycle of publications about the Apostle Paul. These traced the life of Paul from his early years to his imprisonment in Rome. Although they were written by two different anonymous authors they revealed a similar style of biblical interpretation. The series began with several publications by P.S.[28] This author's articles suddenly stopped after his description of Paul's first missionary journey (*BV* vol. 2, 1948),[29] and then were followed by four articles authored by B.M.[30] (*BV*, vols. 3-6, 1948).[31] The change of authors represented a deliberate sharing of the work of writing. In this case the articles were, it seems, written specifically for *BV* by contemporary AUCECB authors. All articles are written in sermonic style, but they focus on historical aspects of Paul's life and are educational, not devotional.

Closer to the end of the first decade of the publication of *BV*, educational articles became multiple and multifaceted. They elucidated different issues of the Old and New Testaments. Sometimes they touched on specific areas such as a biblical calendar[32] or certain manuscripts of the Bible[33]. While in the 1940s the editorial board often reproduced materials from journals and books published before the Communist Revolution, after 1953 such

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[28] The abbreviation P.S. might mean that they were retelling selected parts from Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, although there are more historical details on Paul's background than can be found in Schaff's book. A more probable explanation of this abbreviation was given by V. Kulikov in a private conversation. He suggested that the author of these articles was I. Prokhanov's son Vyachyaslav. That is P.S. means *Prokhanov – syn* (Prokhanov junior). Indeed, Prokhanov mentions in his biography that his second son had received education in history and taught for a time at the Bible Institute in Leningrad in the 1920s (I.S. Prokhanov, *V kotle Rossii* [In the cauldron of Russia] (Chicago, Ill.: World Fellowship of Slavic Evangelical Christians, 1992), pp.203-204). It is known that in the 1940s Vyacheslav was an unofficial worker for the ACECB. All other articles on church history in *BV* in 1947 were by I. Prokhanov.

[29] P.S., 'Pervoie puteshestviie Apostola Pavla' [The first journey of the Apostle Paul], *BV*, vol. 2 (1948), p. 44.

[30] It seems this was 'Brother Mitskevich' (Yakov) or perhaps B. Mordvin, who became the choir director at the Moscow Central Baptist Church in 1947.

[31] B.M., 'Vtoroie puteshestviie Apostola Pavla' [The second journey of the Apostle Paul], *BV*, vol. 3 (1948), p. 26; 'Tret'e puteshestviie Apostola Pavla' [The third journey of the Apostle Paul], *BV*, vol. 4 (1948), p. 18; 'Poslednee prebyvanie Ap. Pavla v Ierusalime' [The last stay of the Apostle Paul in Jerusalem], *BV*, vol. 5 (1948), p. 19; 'Ap. Pavel v Kesarii i Rime' [The Apostle Paul in Caesarea and Rome], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 38.

[32] 'Bibleiskoie letoischisleniie' [Counting years in the Bible], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 34.

[33] N. Tsunenko, 'Sinaiskii manuskript Biblii' [The Sinai manuscript of the Bible], *BV*, vol. 4 (1948), p. 43.

reproductions became very rare. Seemingly this was the result of the censorship policy of the CARC that did not allow direct use of written materials from sources published during the Tsarist period. There was a desire within the AUCECB to promote education, but this was always limited by government directives.

2. The 1950s and 1960s - Karev's leadership

In general three types of educational papers were published in *BV* in the period from the 1950s through the 1960s and until Alexander Karev's death in 1972. From the early 1970s onwards few educational articles were included. First of all, the journal sometimes included articles having the character of short outlines or a set of aphorisms. An example of articles of this kind was a series of papers written by A. Karev in the later 1950s entitled "Thoughts for preachers."[34] These articles now seem rather strange. They appear to come from a preacher's notebook, with various sermon outlines, synopses of historical narratives, illustrations and wise sayings randomly mixed together. As an example, in 1955 an outline of a sermon on 1 Sam. 14:1-13 (the story of Jonathan attacking the Philistines) was supplied,[35] along with illustrations from the lives of John Milton and John Wesley who were presented as examples of "the mission of suffering."[36] It is difficult to find any connections between the sermon and the illustrations, and even the illustrations lack coherence. The function of this article apparently consisted in delivering rather unrelated inspirational ideas to pastors preparing their sermons.

Sometimes, secondly, *BV* reproduced articles from different dictionaries and encyclopaedias. One of the most popular was J. Bokmelder's *Interpretation of the Bible*.[37] Bokmleder was one of those who taught Russian immigrants to the USA at the International Baptist Seminary in East Orange, New Jersey, which was set up by in 1921 to serve Russians, Hungarians, Slovaks and Poles, as part of the American Baptist Home Mission Society's pioneering work with foreign populations.[38] *BV* no. 1(1959) reprinted part of Bokmelder's work.[39] *BV* also drew from the *Biblical Theological Dictionary* published by the Ukrainian

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[34] They were published regularly from 1955 to 1958.

[35] A.V. Karev, 'Mysli dl'a propovednikov' [Thought for preachers], *BV*, vol. 5 (1955), p. 68.

[36] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

[37] J. Bokmelder, *Tolkovatel' Biblii* [Interpretation of the Bible] (East Orange: Published by the author, 1921).

[38] L. Henry, *Home Mission Work of American Baptists* (New York: American Baptist Home Mission Society, n.d.), pp. 21-22.

[39] Bokmelder, *Tolkovatel' Biblii* [Interpretation of the Bible], pp. 353-392.

Baptist Union in 1928,[40] and dictionaries written by a Polish evangelical, Bolesław Göetze.[41] The range of material used, from different countries, is impressive. However, little editing was attempted for some of these reprints, most of which had been first published decades earlier. As a consequence, certain information presented was irrelevant for contemporary readers. To take two examples, the values of coins in biblical times were expressed in tsarist rubles, and an obsolete system was used to convert metrical measures. But in other cases material was amended. For instance, internal analysis shows that the article featured in *BV* in 1960 by N. Konoplev,[42] "The world of plants in Palestine",[43] was based on the book *Biblical flora* by D. Berezkin,[44] written in 1913, but while all the botanical information was taken from Berezkin's book, Konoplev added some devotional notes when various plants of the Bible were mentioned. This piece was typical of many in *BV*, in that the authors and publishers never fully revealed their sources, partly because censors did not allow references to sources published either abroad or before the Communist Revolution. In any case, for *BV* the content of educational material was paramount, and the authorship was of much less importance.

In the third place, the great majority of educational articles were like short lessons that might be delivered in class-rooms. The most popular themes for papers of this kind were historical and biblical topics. Sometimes the articles pursued the practical goal of acquainting readers with events that had an impact on the contemporary situation. For instance, several articles were written about the positive role of Molokans in the early development of the

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[40] *Bibleiskii bogoslovskii slovar'* [Biblical Theological Dictionary] (S.l.: Izdanie Vseukrainskogo soiuza khristian-baptistov, 1928).

[41] Bolesław Göetze was a representative of the Polish department of Prokhanov's Union of Evangelical Christians. See Henryk Ryszard Tomaszewski, *Wspolnoty chrzescijanskie typu ewangeliczno-baptystycznego na terenie Polski w latach 1858-1939* [Christian communities of the Evangelical Baptist type in Poland over the years 1858-1939], vol.2 (Warszawa: Wyzsze Baptystyczne Seminarium Teologiczne, 2006), pp.113-136. He was a chief editor of the evangelical periodical *Droga Zbawienia* and published several books and tracts in the period from 1923 to 1939 (Ibid., pp. 134-135).

[42] This author wrote a series of articles on biblical background.

[43] N.P. Konoplev, 'Rastitel'nyi mir Palestiny' [The world of plants in Palestine], *BV*, vol. 3 (1960), p. 21.

[44] D.M. Berezkin., *Bibleiskaia flora: Nagliadnoe posobie pri chtenii i izuchenii Biblii* [Biblical flora: auxiliary information for reading and studying of the Bible] (S.-Petersburg.: 1914). Certain sentences of the article are word-for-word quotations from Berezkin. The book belonged to Y. Zhidkov and was presented to the library of the AUCECB.

evangelical movement in Russia.[45] These were apparently aimed at explaining and supporting contacts with this religious group. But surely there were two other advantages – taking the Baptist story further back in history and, secondly, providing evidence that evangelicals had indigenous roots and were not therefore altogether a foreign import. More widely, an article in 1965, "Why is Easter observed on different dates?",[46] explained the difference in calculations of this holiday in the Jewish, Orthodox, and Catholic traditions. These differences had caused perplexity among evangelical believers, many of whom were unaware of this issue before the AUCECB started to maintain extensive international contacts. The greatest interest shown by AUCECB was in the recent history of evangelicals in Russia. Indeed, many testimonies and documents that were published in *BV* continue to be unique sources for studies of Russian evangelicals.

It might seem strange to place the Bible at the end of a list of topics which attracted the attention of educators writing for *BV*. But it is important to see that the Bible connected together all that was produced. Bible studies in *BV* were designed primarily for preachers.[47] Many articles were devoted to a systematic presentation of the Bible's teaching. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bible studies and doctrinal teaching were indistinguishable in the minds of *BV* authors. Therefore, there was a certain overlap between dogmatic and educational articles. Information was also regarded as vital. An article in 1945 defended the authorship of the Torah by Moses and, further, proposed that Moses, who must have known the Egyptian system of writing, could have been the inventor of the Hebrew alphabet.[48] History, too, was connected with the Bible. *BV* articles conveyed a sense of the continuity of the historical process started in biblical times, continuing in the present, and advancing to its eschatological end according to biblical prophecies. Telling this story was considered by the AUCECB as a source of spiritual edification. Thus any historical event or

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[45] For example, Y.I.Zh (Y. Zhidkov), 'Molokane – nashi predshestvenniki' [The Molokans , our ancestors], *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), p. 50.

[46] S.G. Shchepetov, 'Pochemu Paskha prazdnuiets'a v raznye chisla' [Why is Easter observed on different dates?], *BV*, vol. 2 (1965), p. 69.

[47] Preachers were the interpreters of the Bible. So the articles for preachers usually contained instructions on biblical interpretation. Examples of such articles are V.S. Shchavelin, 'Chto dolzhen znat' propovednik' [What a preacher must know], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 69.

[48] The article was by N.V., 'Piatiknizhie Moiseevo' [The Pentateuch of Moses], *BV*, vol. 2 (1954), p. 14. The author sometimes relies upon doubtful information. Thus, he reports on some very ancient copy of the Pentateuch that 'was found during the first quarter of the twentieth century in Bukhara' (Uzbekistan). It is noteworthy that he was obviously ignorant about Qumran finds.

any scientific fact was considered from the point of view of the traditional Baptist interpretation of the Bible and from this certain practical moral conclusions were deduced.

The article in 1963, "At the dawn of Christianity", written by K. Somov,[49] serves as a good example of the style of *BV*'s educational articles in the 1960s. Formally, the subject of the feature is an exposition of early Christian history.[50] Without any introduction, the author starts to present the historical background of New Testament events. He explains that the historical situation of that time was no more than an illustration of the fact that "to accomplish his purposes, God can use any circumstances which result from human resistance to his will".[51] Sinful humankind at that time was represented by "the evil Romans",[52] who "conquered all the neighbouring countries with bad intentions".[53] But God used them "to prepare the ground for Christ's coming to this world",[54] by breaking boundaries between different nations. Then Somov turns "to the religious situation of that time",[55] which he characterizes with just one word, "paganism". He lists some deities of the ancient world,[56] and explains that these gods represented sinful traits in human life: for instance, Mars meant wrath; Melitta – lust.[57] Then he proposes that the ultimate moral corruption of ancient Romans was the result of following the wrong teachings of their philosophers, the Epicureans and Stoics.[58] The majority of the article is devoted to a description of the coming of "the Sun of Truth" (that is Christ) to the world.[59] The author concludes by talking about the persecutions of the first Christians, but instead of drawing any parallels to persecution in the USSR he praises the Soviet Union for its religious freedom and calls for commitment to the "motherland". Somov writes:

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[49] K.V. Somov, 'Na zare Khristianstva' [At the dawn of Christianity], *BV*, vol. 5 (1963), p. 55.

[50] The subtitle of this 1963 *BV* article is 'extracts from the history of Christianity'.

[51] Ibid., p. 55.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[54] Ibid., p. 56.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Somov is quite inaccurate from the point of view of modern historical enquiry. His articles are full of errors. Some mistakes are inexplicable: for example he calls the Babylonian chief god Baal instead of Bell. Apparently he relied on his memory from the time of his studies at high school.

[57] Somov apparently borrowed his information from the *History of Herodotus* (Herodotus, *The histories* /transl. by Aubrey De Sélincourt, (London: Penguin Books, 1972), I, p. 199) who mentioned Melitta in connection with the immoral cult of Aphrodite.

[58] K.V. Somov, 'Na zare Khristianstva' [At the dawn of Christianity], *BV*, vol. 5 (1963), pp. 58-59

[59] Ibid., p. 59.

> It is true we have certain spiritual hardships… But at the same time, nobody crucifies us, nobody throws us before wild beasts, nobody burns us alive, nobody pricks our eyes or cuts our tongues… Our problems are insignificant compared with the problems of the first Christians. [60]

He then adds: "Let us be faithful servants of Christ; that means to be servants of people… To serve Christ means to be good citizens of the motherland who actively participate in industrious labour…it means to be fighters for justice and peace in the whole world."[61] The application bears no relationship to the content of the article. Although educational items were given a high priority in *BV* through to the end of the 1960s, and these articles were important, there was little interest in a systematic approach to the aim of biblical education.

d. Questions of pastoral care

Alongside articles designed to raise the general educational level of preachers, *BV* often included materials which were addressed to pastors for use in building up evangelical communities. These articles had a primarily practical purpose, drawing on the Bible and seeking to apply it to contemporary church life. Often such articles were written in the form of prescriptions. In other cases there is more flexibility in what is said, and it is possible to see sincere efforts being made to resolve certain ethical or administrative issues which were arising in church life or to improve the image of ECB congregations in the eyes of secular society. The common feature of such articles was that rather than putting forward any systematic theological analysis of pastoral questions, they commended what their authors saw as "correct" attitudes and behavioural patterns in given situations and in relation to specific issues. Very often the questions addressed had to do with ethical matters or church practice. Specific topics such as Christian marriage or the ministry of women in church were discussed.

1. Issues of behaviour

In 1946, *BV* started a series of articles under the general title "Fostering our believers in their daily life". The agenda of this series was explained in *BV* issue no. 2 (1947) and was obviously inspired by ideas of Prokhanov's Christian cultural revolution.[62] The goal of the

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[60] Ibid., p. 62.

[61] Ibid.

[62] See *Zapisi zasedanii 10go Vsesoiuznogo S'ezda Evangel'skikh Khristian v Leningrade c 30-go noiabr'a po 6-e dekabria* [Minutes of the 10th All-union Congress of Evangelical Christians in Leningrad from Nov. 30 to Dec. 6, 1926, in the House of Salvation, Zhelyabova 25, Leningrad: I.Prokhanov, Y.Zhidkov, 1927] (Leningrad,1927), pp. 22-23.

programme was to raise the cultural level of believers. It included such themes as: soberness, hygiene and ecology (though this word was unknown at that time). The publication of articles of this kind lasted till 1949, though the themes did not follow the announced plan strictly.[63] There were three articles in 1946: "Enjoy fresh air" (no. 4),[64] "The harm of smoking" (no. 5),[65] and "Cleanliness" (no. 6).[66] There were four articles in 1947: "On marriage" (no. 1),[67] "Do not look at the wine…" (no. 2),[68] "On planting trees" (no. 4),[69] and "On right nourishment" (no. 6).[70] A related article published in1948 was devoted to the greatness of the Russian language.[71] Correct use of language, it was believed, raised the cultural level of believers and proved the patriotic spirit of Soviet Baptists. One article appeared in *BV* in 1949 entitled "A sin against the body" (no. 1).[72] Issues such as smoking, marriage, alcoholism, and planting of trees are all covered as if they were related. The logic of such selection seems to be that there is a need for good behaviour by believers in all areas of their lives. The prohibition regarding smoking is typical in its attempt to apply biblical teaching. The article "The harm of smoking" used 2 Cor.3:6. The body there is compared with the temple of God. "Is it proper to smoke in the temple?" – the author asks rhetorically, echoing an old Russian Orthodox custom that prohibited smoking in the church. "Surely not!"- comes the expected reply. [73] But since the body of a believer is itself such a temple, the reader is expected to conclude that no believer should smoke.

Some of the articles, whether intentionally or not, depict believers as people needing very basic instructions about life.[74] For instance, in the article "Cleanliness", A. Karev paints the following picture of popular habits: "while many people take a bath in rivers or seas

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[63] Some of the themes announced at the beginning (for example, 'On the fight with illiteracy') were apparently improper for that period and, moreover, unwanted by the authorities. It was claimed that illiteracy had been eradicated in the 1930s. Thus such articles never appeared.

[64] A.V.K., 'Lubite chistyi vozdukh' [Enjoy fresh air], *BV*, vol. 4 (1946), p. 27.

[65] N.Ts.Shch. (N. Tsunenko), 'Vred kureniia' [The harm of smoking], *BV*, vol. 5 (1946), p. 44.

[66] A.V.K., 'Chistoplotnost' [Cleanliness], *BV*, vol. 6 (1946), p. 49.

[67] 'O brake'[On marriage], *BV*, vol. 1 (1947), p. 63.

[68] Tsunenko, N., 'Ne smotri na vino…' [Do not look at the vine…], *BV*, vol. 2 (1947), p. 54.

[69] P.T., 'O drevonasazhdenii ' [On planting trees], *BV*, vol. 4 (1947), p. 51.

[70] I.K.S., 'O pravil'nom pitanii' [On right nourishment], *BV*, vol. 6 (1947), p. 68.

[71] I.K.S., 'Velikii russkii iazyk' [The great Russian language], *BV*, vol. 4 (1948), p. 3.

[72] N.Voronezhskii, 'Grekh protiv tela' [A sin against the body], *BV*, vol.1 (1949), p. 68.

[73] N.Ts.Shch. (N. Tsunenko), 'Vred kureniia' [The harm of smoking], *BV*, vol.5 (1946), p. 44.

[74] It does not seem to me that the authors were being forced to pass on atheistic propaganda in this area. The tone of the articles betrays the sincere desire of the authors to improve the situation.

during the summer in winter time they usually do not wash their bodies."[75] The author expounds his theme like a personal hygiene specialist,[76] explaining that such a custom has a bad impact on health, and then continues: "We want to recommend to all our brothers and sisters to visit bath-houses every week and to wash the body with warm water."[77] Of course, all such hygienic exhortations were supported with the authority of the Holy Scriptures. Thus, the call to cleanliness was based on Heb.10:22: "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water".[78] The author stresses that the heart cleansed from a guilty conscience should be accompanied by a body washed with pure water, therefore Christians should practise good hygiene: wash their hands before meals, visit bath-houses. Such a proof-texting way of using the Bible, taking texts out of their original context in order to make a point, is typical for materials in this series.

Attention was also given to marriage. How married couples should behave was important for evangelicals, with their tradition of the Christian home as a basic unity. In spite of an obvious desire of many of the authors of *BV* to remain aloof from Orthodoxy, its influence can be seen in the attitudes of the AUCECB writers in this area. The tradition of Orthodox asceticism and a negative attitude to sexuality inherited from so-called Spiritual Christians (discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis) appear in most materials devoted to Christian marriage. The article "Christian marriage", in *BV* in 1956, can serve as an example.[79] The author rejects sexual pleasure in any form, even inside marriage. It is clear that the norms of Communist morality were merging with puritanical Orthodox tradition. The article uses phrases like "The instinct of sex", which was a term from the vocabulary of behaviourism that was accepted as official Communist psychology.[80] It then states that this instinct was distorted by the fall of man. In Orthodox theology sexual desire is a direct manifestation of the fall.[81] Finally the article contends that humanity is defiled by the cult of sexual pleasure, which is a typical expression from Communist criticism of bourgeois morality.[82] It is

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[75] Ibid., p. 49.

[76] These articles are similar to propagandistic booklets devoted to issues of hygiene and obviously are borrowed to a significant extent from such booklets.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., p. 50.

[79] V.V.F.(unidentified), 'Khristianskii brak' [Christian marriage], *BV*, vol. 2 (1956), p. 39.

[80] Ibid.

[81] A very good analysis of sexuality in Russian Orthodoxy may be found in V.V. Rosanov, *Liudi lunnogo sveta* [The moonlight people] (St. Petersburg, 1913), pp. 11-25.

[82] V.V.F.,'Khristianskii brak' [Christian marriage], *BV*, vol. 2 (1956), pp. 39-40.

noteworthy that, in spite of claiming that denial of sexual pleasure is to be commended because it is a biblical doctrine, the author does not include a single quotation from the Bible.

A negative attitude to the "physical" side of marriage can also be seen in an article "About marriage", written by V. Kovalkov in 1968.[83] He proposes a kind of manual for those preparing to get married. His main idea consists in demonstrating the pure "spiritual" character of a Christian marriage. He urges his readers not to rely upon their preferences but to seek for a clear indication from God in their choice of partner. He does not insist on the supernatural character of such guidance but rather proposes that the choice of a partner should be the result of serious reckoning and the person should be appropriate for one's life circumstances. The author refers to the episode of the wedding of Isaac (Gen. 24). Marriage itself should be a living "symbol of union between the Lamb of God Jesus Christ and his church."[84] In practice, the "purity of marriage", for this author, meant abstinence from sexual relations, except when these were directly related to childbirth. He appealed not only to biblical texts but also to the opinions of Doctor N.V. Sletov, who claimed that sexual relations were harmful for health.[85] It seems that abstinence was the main concern of Kovalkov in his article, which mostly consists of exhortations "to keep the holiness of marriage from being defiled by sin."[86] Biblical statements such as "those who have wives should live as though they had none" (1Cor. 7:29) and "there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Mt. 7:12)[87] were used, as in many other instances, without any real regard for their context.

An important aim in pastoral articles consisted in educating believers to fit a certain model which would satisfy the norms of biblical spirituality and also Communist morality. A model believer was presented in the article in 1960, "Keep the pattern of sound teaching", by

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[83] V. Koval'kov, 'O brake' [About marriage], *BV*, vol. 5 (1968), p. 60.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid., p. 62. Sletov was the author of the first book on cosmetics in Russia, published in 1909: N.V. Sletov, *Kurs vrachebnoi kosmetiki dlia vrachei, massazhistok i publiki* [A Course of medical cosmetics for physicians, masseuse, and the public] (Moscow, 1909). In 1968, copies of this book would only have been found in a few private libraries. A quotation from it was probably transmitted from generation to generation of believers and reproduced in sermons on issues of morality.

[86] Ibid., p. 63.

[87] Quoting this passage, Kovalkov follows the argumentation of a traditional Russian cult of eunuchs (*Skoptsi*) who, like Baptists, had Molokan roots. This cult was described in S. Fanforonovskii, *Ucheniie dukhovnykh skoptsov* [The teaching of the Spiritual Skoptsy] (in *Materialy k istorii i izucheniiu russkogo sektantstva i raskola Vyp. 3: Shtundisty. - Postniki. Svobodnye khristiane. Dukhovnye skoptsy. Staroobriadtsy*, Ed. V. Bonch-Bruevich, St. Petersburg, 1910, p. 64).

A. Mitskevich,[88] based on 2 Tim.1:13. The "sound teaching" in this article consists of the following points:

1) denial of the value of religious traditions (implying the Orthodox tradition) that do not rely completely upon the Bible;

2) denial of superstitions of any kind;

3) increasing attention being given to healthcare (abstinence from drinking alcohol and smoking);

4) complete fulfilment of civic duties;

5) involvement in the "cultural achievements of the people", which consisted in raising the educational level of believers.

The author found a number of biblical arguments for each point in his list. This article serves as a good illustration of the developing tendency among believers in the AUCECB to seek to prove that Soviet Baptists could be fully-fledged members of the Communist society. Indeed, it sought to demonstrate that the ideals of evangelical Christians never contradicted the "moral codex of a builder of Communism."[89] These ideals even included the fight with "religious superstition" represented by the Orthodox Church, "superstition" disliked by the Soviet regime and by the Baptists. The ideas of this article were developed by A. Mitskevich later in the obviously propagandistic article "The Christian and his social obligations in the world around", [90] which called Christians to social involvement. This article added to the list of Christian virtues identified above such points as industrious labour and the struggle for peace. Biblical teaching was being affirmed as crucial, but Communist realities often dictated how the Bible was used.

2. Issues of church order

In the early years of the AUCECB many *BV* articles were devoted to proper order in the church. In two special articles in that period, Y. Zhidkov sought to convince believers that

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[88] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Derzhis' obraztsa zdravogo ucheniia' [Maintain the pattern of sound teaching], *BV*, vol. 1 (1960), p. 52.

[89] This document was accepted during the 22nd Congress of the CPSU and was included in the third edition of the Communist Party Program (ed. 1973, p.120). It contained such norms as mutual respect for all people, commitment to family values, honesty, helpfulness. Its author, writer F. Burlatsky, recently confessed that he used the Bible in its writing: F. Burlatsky, 'Sud'ba dala mne shans' [Fate gave me a chance], *Russkii advokat*, vol. 5, 2007, pp. 4-8.

[90] A.I.M., 'Kristianin i ego obschestvennye obiazanosti v okruzhaiuschem mire' [The Christian and his social obligations in the world around], *BV*, vol. 1 (1963), p. 49.

they should maintain church discipline and follow the Statutes of the Union.[91] In general, he relies on texts that speak about obedience to the Apostles. It is curious that Zhidkov uses a word play from the passage in Ecclesiastes 8:5 "the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure."[92] In the Russian of the Synodal Version of the Bible the expression "proper procedure" sounds like the word "Statute" in modern Russian. In using such a doubtful method of persuasion, Zhidkov was obviously exploiting the literal approach to the Scriptures which characterised AUCECB communities. Other aspects of building up church community life related to forms of worship services, acceptance into membership, excommunication of church members and the appointment of ministers. Often articles in *BV* were designed to deliver a biblical apologetic to support official AUCECB documents and Soviet-style organizational systems that were prevalent at that time.

Zhidkov was concerned to defend the Statutes of the AUCECB in a 1956 *BV* article "The Church of Christ and its order."[93] In this article, he deals with the issue of conflicts that arose between local churches and their pastors. These conflicts were a common situation at that time, although not so often discussed in *BV*. Although Zhidkov devotes some words to condemn "*diotrephstvo*" (that is, a despotic style of leadership, from Diotrephes of 3 John 9), his real concern was to prevent believers from being disobedient to their pastors. He points to a series of biblical quotations which talk about the necessity of the obedience of "God's people" to their leaders.[94] His central argument relies upon Paul's metaphor of the Church as the body of Christ in which, with rather doubtful warrant, he sees divine approval for strict hierarchy in the organization of the Church. In his opinion, pastors should "keep the flock of Christ in proper submission and humbleness according to the customs of God's children."[95]

A special problem that bothered the AUCECB in 1948-1949 was the problem of decent conduct at worship services. Neither *glossolalia* nor any emotional expressions were welcomed: indeed they were considered dangerous. The CARC commended quietness, and in

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[91] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'O tserkovnoi distsipline' [About church discipline], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 6; 'Polozhenie o Suiuze Evangel'skikh Khristian - Baptistov' [Regulations of the Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 19.

[92] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Polozhenie o Suiuze Evangel'skikh Khristian - Baptistov' [Regulations of the Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 20.

[93] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Tserkov' Khristova i ee por'adki' [The Church of Christ and its order], *BV*, vol. 5 (1956), p. 5.

[94] He started by recalling the disasters of Israel during the time of Judges when 'Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit', and finished with exhortations from 1Peter 5:5, Heb. 3:17, Phil. 2:12.

[95] Ibid., p. 7.

an article "On quietness and reverence at our services",[96] Karev claims that Baptist churches should become "spots of quiet and rest".[97] He argues that Jesus himself preferred to avoid loud meetings and "prayed in mountains in complete silence".[98] It is noteworthy that his other argument is that the church should become a place of rest after industrious work, which was useful for workers according to research by Soviet scientists.[99] Worship services were addressed in an article in 1955 by Y. Zhidkov, "Order of preaching in our worship meetings."[100] The article rejects informality in Sunday worship services. It reminds readers of AUCECB Statute paragraphs accepted in 1948,[101] regarding restrictions in respect of preaching in the communities.[102] Zidkov easily finds arguments in favour of the Statute and condemns those "alien male and female preachers who bring to our congregations false teachings and harm members of the churches."[103] The context shows that he means here charismatic church leaders who were operating in independent ways. Also he criticizes sermons that could give rise to disorder of any sort.[104]

Sometimes, however, the goal in articles about AUCECB worship arose not so much from the concern to adjust to the realm of Communist society or from worries about new phenomena as from attachment to the traditions inherited from the time before the Revolution. N. Shchavelin's article in 1955, "About reverence in the house of prayer",[105] calls readers to maintain silence before and during worship services in order to express in this way the highest respect for the "sacredness of the house of prayer".[106] Although quietness of services was recommended by the CARC, the author was inspired not by official

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[96] A.V. Karev, 'O tishine i blagogovenii v nashem sluzhenii' [On quietness and reverence at our services], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 44.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., p.46

[100] Y.I.Zh. (Y.I. Zhidkov), 'Por'adok propovedi v nashikh bogosluzhebnykh sobraniiakh' [Order of preaching in our worship meetings], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 53.

[101] This was a revision of the initial statutes accepted in 1944 (see chapter 3).

[102] The Statutes of that time allowed preaching by any 'gifted brothers and sisters who are able to exhort the church.' In 1960 the Statutes became harsher and only appointed leaders of congregations had the right to preach.

[103] He used such passages as 1Tim. 6:2-5; 2Tim. 4:2-4, etc.

[104] These were sermons which were too long, sermons about denominational differences that lead to separations, and preaching on mystical issues.

[105] N. Shchavelin, 'O blagogovenii v dome molitvy' [About reverence in the house of prayer], *BV*, vol. 5 (1955), p. 41.

[106] Ibid., p. 43.

prescriptions but rather, it seems, by the Orthodox tradition of the veneration of church buildings. [107] The idea of the sacred character of worship services can also be observed in the article written by I. Motorin in 1957, "About worship services in the days of the apostles and in our days."[108] The article, surprisingly, claims that worship should have a strict ceremonial order, as in the Orthodox Church,[109] and he even proposes such an order, taking as a model worship services at the Moscow Central Baptist Church.[110] Arguments for a formalization of services included pointing to the "fact" that all the elements present in the Moscow Central Church were also mentioned in the Bible.[111]

There was a short, anonymous, but clearly authoritative article published in *BV* in 1945 about the kinds of ministry which are available for women.[112] The author lists the ministries that, in his opinion, are permitted for women by the Bible. It appears that a woman can be involved four types of church activities: charity, "being a deaconess" (the author does not explain what exactly this means), "word service in the church" (preaching), and singing (the author fails to find a specific Scripture quote about female singing and simply notes that women are very successful at such ministry).[113] In this list, preaching is noteworthy. Historically, Russian evangelicals had not approved of female preaching, but after the Second World War many congregations did not have male preachers and so the article tries to facilitate worship in such churches. It disputes the phrase "let the women keep silence in the churches" (1 Cor.14:34) as not being a plausible argument for banning female preaching.[114] The author points to examples from the Scriptures where women's voices were heard in the church and concludes that the claim of 1 Cor.14:34 "is conditional (conventional)". He seems to take the meaning to be that it is improper to prohibit women to preach. As result, the author concludes, "it is clear that women can work as preachers in the church".[115]

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[107] It is interesting to compare this article with similar recommendations of Union leaders in the 1940s. which clearly showed the impact of pressure by the state. While in the 1940s the quietness of worship was a demand of the CARC, later it became the norm for ECB churches.

[108] I. Motorin, 'O bogosluzhenii v dni Apostolov i v nashi dni' [About worship services in the days of the apostles and in our days], *BV*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 7.

[109] He even used the Orthodox term *chin* ("ceremonial order").

[110] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[111] Ibid.

[112] 'O sluzhenii zhenshin v tserkvi' [About the ministry of women in church], *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), p. 47.

[113] Ibid., p. 49.

[114] Ibid., p. 48.

[115] Ibid., p. 47.

A final area dealt with was the financial support of pastors in the AUCECB. In 1963 an article was published in *BV*, "Pastor or hireling?", by V.S.[116] The author explains that the sincerity of ministers in ECB churches can be proved by the fact that they do not charge believers for administering church rites such as baptisms or weddings, or for prayers offered for sick members.[117] However, there was the internal issue that the AUCECB was spending enormous sums of money on overseas trips, and donations to peace-making organizations, while most ECB pastors did not receive any support from their churches and had to work in state companies in order to support their families,[118] a situation very likely to produce disquiet in local communities. The author tries to refute criticism of the financial policy of the AUCECB. At the same time, the article shows that financial support of mission is in full accord with biblical teaching. For example, women supported Jesus and his inner circle of disciples (Luke 8:1-3) and the Philippians supported Paul (Phil. 4:14-19). Also the author appeals to the common sense of his readers, explaining that without their support many really important activities, like peace-making or international contacts, would become impossible.[119] The absolute value of such activities, in order that the AUCECB could function in Soviet society, was beyond discussion. The need for proper pastoral leadership and within that the education of pastors was recognised through articles in *BV* in the 1950s and 1960s, and *BV* authors were central to the educational aims of the AUCECB, with the issue of education seen as serving the proper functioning of the AUCECB as an organisation dedicated to proper church order.

e. Bible Correspondence Courses

During Alexei Bichkov's period as AUCECB General Secretary, beginning in 1971, much of the energy of *BV* authors was directed toward writing articles related to spiritual formation. The educational materials which had been so important (as analysed above) almost completely disappeared from the pages of the periodical. This might seem to indicate that interest in spiritual practice meant that all theological debates came to an end. To some extent it is the case that theology became less important in the eyes of the new generation of leaders. They had never studied at any theological school and had little or no idea about theology as

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[116] V.S., 'Pastyr' ili naemnik?' [Pastor or hireling?], *BV*, vol. 5 (1963), p. 40.

[117] Here is an obvious hint regarding the practice of the Orthodox Church, which had fixed prices for every kind of services offered by the Church.

[118] This was a well-known fact. See for instance 'Iz otchotov nashikh starshikh presviterov' [From reports of our superintendents], *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), p. 27.

[119] V.S., 'Pastyr' ili naemnik?' [Pastor or hireling?], p. 40.

an academic discipline. But a great achievement of the Union during the 1970s and 1980s was to operate a distance-learning theological school. As a result, to produce educational materials in the pages of *BV* did not have such great importance as in previous years. From 1968 on, the AUCECB was able to operate Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC).[120] This meant not only that many church ministers received an opportunity to obtain serious theological and practical training but also that the AUCECB had a vehicle, besides publications in *BV*, to publish materials that would define its identity.

Initially the academic programme of the BCC consisted of seven subjects: Christian Doctrine, Exegesis, Introduction to the Bible, Preaching, Pastoral Care, History of the ECB, and Constitution of the USSR.[121] In 1973 the programme was expanded and the training time increased to three years. In 1979 the course opened a new department for the training of musical leaders. In 1994 this department was reorganized to become the Institute of Spiritual Music. In 1991, with the end of the Soviet period, the Bible Correspondence Course was renamed Moscow Bible Institute, and P. Savchenko became its new rector. During all those years the curriculum of the BCC remained basically the same. Radical changes happened only in 1995 when Vladimir Riaguzov became the new rector of the Moscow Bible Institute.[122] The main focus for the purpose of this investigation of AUCECB publications is the production of textbooks.

The Union leadership had been expecting to receive permission to run the BCC for several years. The final decision was made on 16 August 1965, but the first students were not able to enrol until 9 February 1968.[123] The years between these two dates were devoted to writing new lessons or, as happened more often, to compiling materials from works published in the past. Since the students of the Courses met their teachers only a few days per year, the production of textbooks or manuals for each subject was crucial for the programme. The idea of writing theological textbooks existed long before it became possible to do so. In previous

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[120] The Russian abbreviation for the Bible Correspondence Courses was ZBK (*Zaochniye Bibleyskiye Kurs*y).

[121] 'Otkrytie bibleiskikh kursov' [Openning of the Bible Courses], *BV*, vol. 4 (1968), p. 77.

[122] The subsequent history of the development of education in the ECB can be found in W. Sawatsky, 'There-positioning of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Sister Church Unions between 1980 and 2005', in Sharyl Corrado and Toivo Pilli, eds., *Eastern European Baptist History: new Perspectives* (Prague: IBTS, 2007), pp. 187-209, esp. pp. 200-203; Also 'Visions in conflict: starting anew through the prism of leadership training', in *Christianity after communism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 113-136, esp. pp. 127-130.

[123] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Desiatiletie pervogo vypuska zaochnykh bibleiskikh kursov' [The tenth anniversary of the first graduation of the Bible Correspondence Courses of the ECB], *BV*, vol. 4 (1981), p. 61.

years many authors had written works that could be presented as lessons in theology. For example, the first lesson in the textbook on the History of Christianity appeared in 1965.[124] It was an article by Somov, "Prototypes of Christian History in the pages of the Holy Scriptures", in which the author presented his dispensational view of the development of human history. There is nothing in the article that betrays that it was part of an extended course. Obviously, at the time of writing it was not. But by the time of the start of BCC it had already been included with some corrections as an introductory chapter in the book "The history of Christianity." Such prompt compilation proves that the AUCECB was planning and preparing training materials some time before 1968.

In total nine textbooks were eventually written for the BCC. The first five books were ready for the opening of the BCC in 1968. These were:

1. A. Karev, A. Mitskevich and V. Popov. *Ekzegetika* (Exegesis).[125] Initially this book was written by Karev, long before the start of the course, while he was still closely cooperating with I. Prokhanov. It was a series of sermons on the Gospel of John and the Epistle of James. Every chapter of the textbook corresponded to one chapter of a biblical book, so the total number of chapters was 26 (21 from John and 5 from James). It did not include any methodological materials. Students had to imitate the style of these sermons, relying on their observation and intuition. Later the textbook was expanded to include several chapters by other authors. First, A. Mitskevich added an introductory lesson and two short dictionaries: a dictionary of meanings of biblical names and a dictionary of archaic words in the Synodal Version of the Bible. Here he used the dictionary written by I. Motorin[126] and some other popular secular dictionaries (for example, one by Ozhegov[127]). Finally, the pastor of the Tambov church, V. Popov, completed the course with several lessons on the methodology of biblical interpretation.

2. A. Bichkov and A.I. Mitskevich. *Dogmatika* (Dogmatics).[128] In an article in 1981, "The tenth anniversary of the first graduation of the Bible Correspondence Courses of the

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[124] V.M. Kovalkov, 'Pervyi khristianskii sobor' [The First Christian Council], *BV*, vol. 4 (1965), p. 57.

[125] A.Karev, A.Mitskevich, V.Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[126] I. Motorin, *Populiarnyi bibleisko-bogoslovskii slovar'* [Popular biblical theological dictionary] (Kharkov: Izdanie Khar'kovskogo Oblastnogo Soiuza Evangel'skikh Khristian, 1927).

[127] S.I. Ozhegov,, *Slovar' russkogo iazyka* [Dictionary of Russian Language] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarei, 1953).

[128] A. Bichkov, A. Mitskevich, *Dogmatika* [Dogmatics] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

ECB",[129] A. Mitskevich writes: "We asked A.M. Bichkov to translate the English dogmatic theology of Dr. W. Evans from the Institute named after Moody."[130] He explained that the translated material was expanded with certain themes from Kargel's *Dogmatic Theology.*[131] In fact, virtually the whole text of the BCC manual is taken from Evans' book. As noted before, the choice of this book as the foundation for the textbook was not because Evans was highly regarded in ECB circles but because Bichkov had found the book in the private library of a Moscow Baptist church member. Kargel's paper was too short to affect the content of the textbook, but Mitskevich could not avoid mentioning this because at that time Kargel's text was the official doctrinal statement accepted by the ECB. Mitskevich and Bichkov simply shortened and rearranged Evans' text.[132] For example, they placed the chapter on the doctrine of Scripture before the chapter on the doctrine of the Church. Quite obviously in this they wished to stress the primacy of the Bible over the Church, a point of ongoing controversy between Baptists and the Orthodox Church.

3. A. Karev, K. Somov. *Istoriya Hristianstva* (History of Christianity).[133] This book was compiled from articles published in *BV* after 1965. It consisted of 20 chapters. Every chapter was devoted to one century of Christian history. The first twelve chapters were prepared by K. Somov, who was considered by members of the AUCECB as a specialist in ancient history. According to Walter Mitskevich (son of Arthur Mitskevich), it was a free translation from an English dispensationalist book on church history, a book which has not, as yet been identified. The last chapters were written by A. Karev. All the chapters had previously been published in *BV.* The book was revised in 1986 by a BCC church history teacher, I. Petrik,[134] who divided its text into smaller parts to make it easier for reading by the students.

4. W.Mitskevich. *Bibliologia* (Bibliology).[135] This book presents a compilation of several books written at the beginning of the twentieth century: "Introduction to the Bible",

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[129] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Desiatiletie pervogo vypuska zaochnykh bibleiskikh kursov' [The tenth anniversary of the first graduation of the Bible Correspondence Courses of ECB], *BV*, vol. 4 (1981), p. 61.

[130] W. Evans, *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (republished, BiblioBazaar, LLC, 2006).

[131] Mitskevich, 'Desiatiletie pervogo vypuska zaochnykh bibleiskikh kursov' [The tenth anniversary of the first graduation of the Bible Correspondence Courses of ECB], p. 62.

[132] It seems that the order of the chapters was the main contribution that Kargel's work made to the book.

[133] A.V. Karev, K.V. Somov, *Istoriya Hristianstva* [The History of Christianity] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[134] Ibid. p. 14.

[135] W.A. Mitskevich, *Bibliologiia* [Bible studies] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

by G. Iasinitskii,[136] "Interpretation of the Bible", by J. Bolkmelder,[137] and "Guide to reading and studying the Bible,"[138] translated from "Dictionnaire de la Bible" by F. Vigouroux.[139] Walter Mitskevich was the author/editor of this compilation. He recounts that his work consisted in producing a digest of different reference materials in order to equip pastors, with a short manual on the Bible.[140]

5. Short Course on *Gomiletika* (Homiletics). This was an adaptation of the book written by Prokhanov with the same title, which in turn was an adaptation of C.H. Spurgeon's book *Lectures to my Students,*[141] the final editing being undertaken by A. Mitskevitch.[142] During Prokhanov's time Spurgeon's book had already been translated into Russian. But it had two disadvantages for Russian evangelicals. First, it was too personalized. Spurgeon supplied within it with many examples from his personal life, so to many readers his book seemed more like a novel than an objective "true revelation of God's truth."[143] Second, the book was too long and complicated for semi-literate evangelical preachers. Prokhanov's work consisted in converting it into simple and straightforward instructions on fewer pages. It was in this form that the book entered the curriculum of the BCC. In the early 1970s A. Mitskevich produced a book, *Pastorskoye bogosloviye* (Pastoral care),[144] on the basis of the book written by P. Rogozin,[145] entitled "Pastor".[146]

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[136] G.I. Iasinitskii, *Vvedenie k izucheniiu Biblii* [Introduction to Bible studies] (S.l.: "Mech Gedeona", 1936).

[137] J. Bokmelder, *Tolkovatel' Biblii* [Interpretation of the Bible] (East Orange: Published by the author, 1921).

[138] F. Viguru, *Rukovodstvo k chteniiu i izucheniiu Biblii* [The guide to reading and study of the Bible] (Moscow, 1902).

[139] F. Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1895).

[140] Interview with Walter Mitskevich, 10 December, 2009.

[141] C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students: a selection from addresses delivered to the students of The Pastors' College, Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1876).

[142] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Desiatiletie pervogo vypuska zaochnykh bibleiskikh kursov' [The tenth anniversary of the first graduation of the Bible Correspondence Courses of ECB], *BV*, vol. 4 (1981), p. 61

[143] V.A. Popov, *I.S.Prokhanov, stranitsi zhizni* [I.S.Prokhanov, Pages of life] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 1996), pp. 100-101.

[144] A.I. Mitskevich, *Pastorskoe bogoslovie* [Pastoral care] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[145] Pavel Rogozin (1898-1974) was a pastor of Russian churches in France (before World War II) and in the USA (after World War II). He had been a popular author among Russian evangelicals since the 1920s. See V.C. Kushnir, *Nevidimyie ruki* [Invisible hands] (Corntal: Licht im Osten, 2004), pp. 221, 225, 226, 231.

[146] P.I. Rogozin, *Pastyr'* [Pastor] (Licht im Osten, 1989).

In the 1980s the AUCECB planned to produce a further four textbooks,[147] but in fact only three of them were actually published. The first of the three was by P. Savchenko, *Sravnitelnoye Bogosloviye* (Comparative religion).[148] Savchenko was one of the leaders of the BCC and later became its president. The approach demonstrated by him in this book was eclectic. Other Christian traditions considered in the book were Catholicism, different strands of Protestantism, and evangelical Christianity. Savchenko asked his colleagues to help him in writing this book, so the range of the traditions included merely demonstrated the areas in which his friends were experts. For example, I. Dyck, of Mennonite origin, wrote a chapter on Mennonites, and S. Nikolayev, who had met Reformed Christians during his foreign trips, helped Savchenko with writing a part about the Reformed Church. Also, Savchenko used various meagre sources on comparative religion which were available in the USSR to produce a book which contained some information on different religions.

The largest part of Savchenko's work was devoted to the Orthodox Church and explained the foundational principles of Orthodoxy, though on quite a popular level. Other chapters were devoted to Lutherans, Reformed, Methodists, Moravian Brethren, Mennonites and Seventh-Day Adventists. Some religions, some movements and some cults were not taken into account simply because the team of writers had no information on them. For example, the book has nothing to say about Islam, while by contrast the article about Hinduism, written by M. Karetnikova, who used to live in India with her family, is quite extended. Savchenko's work is more like a reference book. It is interesting that he placed a mini-dictionary of terms used in the Orthodox Church right in the middle of his writing.

The second book was by I. Chekalov, *Nravstvennoye bogosloviye* (Moral theology, or Christian ethics).[149] Chekalov was a pastor in Riga, Latvia, and periodically came to Moscow to lecture to BCC students. His book seems to be the only handbook written from beginning to end by just one person and written specifically for the Course. This book embraced a wide range of issues on Christian practice: from the question of the nature of the Holy Spirit[150] to attitudes to be adopted towards the writings of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky,[151] and from the treatment of alcoholism[152] to how the Decalogue relates to the teaching of the

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[147] A.M. Bichkov , 'Otchot 42mu S'ezdu EKhB' [Report of to the 42th Congress of the ECB], *BV*, vol.1-2 (1980), p. 19.

[148] P.D. Savchenko, *Sravnitelnoye Bogosloviye* [Comparative religion] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[149] I. Chekalov, *Nravstvennoye bogosloviye* [Moral theology] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[150] Ibid., pp. 93-118.

[151] Ibid., pp. 41-43.

[152] Ibid., pp. 142-143.

New Testament.[153] The text of the manual reveals the wisdom and erudition of its author, though the logic of the presentation of the material is sometimes puzzling. A significant weakness of Chekalov's book was that it presented his personal views and so it was less influential than some other works from the BCC series.

The third book, by L. Glinskaya and P. Savchenko, was *Osnovy muzikalnogo sluzheniya* (Basics of musical ministry).[154] The book was a compilation of articles devoted to different aspects of music ministry in the church, written by different authors whose works had been published previously in *BV*. This compilation was produced by Glinskaya and Savchenko, both BCC teachers, in the early 1980s. A fourth book, a textbook on the history of the ECB, was written by A. Mitskevich, but it was not published until 2007.[155] As a result, lectures on this subject existed only in oral form during the AUCECB period. After 1998 the BCC used the "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR"[156] for classes at the BCC,[157] though this book was not specifically designed for educational purposes.[158]

The textbooks mentioned above were reproduced using rotaprints till the end of Perestroika. Not long before the fall of the Soviet Union they were printed in Bischoffen (Germany) and imported to the USSR.[159] Officially they were distributed only among students of the BCC but, in fact, their readership was much wider. In addition to the textbooks for the BCC there was one other book published by the AUCECB in this period, apart from Bibles and hymnals.[160] This was the two-volume "Presbyter's Handbook".[161]

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[153] Ibid., pp. 206-208.

[154] L. Glinskaya, P. Savchenko, *Osnovi muzikal'nogo sluzheniya* [The basics of musical ministry] (Moscow: VSEKhB).

[155] See chapter 1 of this thesis.

[156] *Istoriia Ievangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: Izdaniie Vsesoiuznogo Soveta Evangel'skikh Khristian Baptistov, 1989)

[157] By that time the BCC had been renamed. Its new title was the Bible Correspondence Institute.

[158] This book was compiled from articles written by different authors. The project was run by S. Savinsky who had recently published his own book: S.N. Savinskii, *Istoriia evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov Ukrainy, Rossii, Belorussii. Ch. I: (1867-1917), Ch. II: (1917-1967)* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Ukraine, Russia and Belorussia, Part I: (1867-1917), Part II: (1917-1967)] (St. Petersburg: "Bibliia dla vsekh", 2001).

[159] These books did not have any publishing information in their first edition, which indicates that they may have initially been designed for smuggling. But it appears that there was no need for any illegal action for their import to the USSR.

[160] This was the only fully-fledged book published in those years.

[161] *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Presbyter's Handbook] (v.1, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1982) (v.2, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1987).

These volumes were printed in 1982 and in 1987 respectively.[162] They imitated the 5-volume "Priest's Handbook"[163] produced by the Orthodox Church. The Moscow Patriarchate published a revised edition from 1977 to 1986. The complicated Orthodox rites and traditions demanded liturgical ability on the part of priests. At the same time, most Orthodox ministers never received any special education. So for them the "Priest's Handbook" was a very important tool. The situation with Baptist ministers was different. They were less restricted by special rules and regulations in their ministry.[164] So the "Presbyter's Handbook" was not of so great an importance for ECB pastors. Nevertheless, the AUCECB could not miss the opportunity to publish a religious book. The first volume contained no new material at all. It consisted only of articles published in *BV* in previous years. The only innovation in the second volume consisted in including several chapters from Spurgeon's *Lectures to my Students*, as well as Motorin's dictionary.

Both volumes began with the same three parts. The first part was Biblical doctrines, including articles on specific topics of the Bible: God,[165] salvation,[166] and sin,[167] among others. The second part had to do with pastoral ministry. The content of this section demonstrated the AUCECB's understanding of the role of a pastor in a church. As set out in the "Presbyter's Handbook", this role principally comprised two things: preaching and organizing worship services. Preaching occupied the first place in the short list of a pastor's responsibilities. Almost all articles in this section, especially in the second volume, are devoted to this theme. In the two volumes only one article touched on the issue of pastoral counselling.[168] The third area was the unity of Christians. This part contained documents that regulated the coexistence of different evangelical denominations inside the Union, such as

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[162] During the Congress in 1985 Bichkov mentioned plans to publish this book in three volumes ('Otchetnyi doklad Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov 43-mu Vsesoiuznomu s"ezdu EKhB' [Report of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians–Baptists to the 43rd All-Union Congress of ECB], *BV*, vol. 3 (1985), p. 28). But the third volume was not issued, probably because Perestroika rendered out-of-date many issues considered in the first two volumes (especially the ideological issues).

[163] *Nastol'naia kniga sviaschennika* [Priest's Handbook] ((Moscow: *Izdatelstvo Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, v.1, 1977; v. 2,1978; v. 3; v. 4, 1983; v. 5, 1986).

[164] This was true only in regard to AUCECB pastors. The CCECB demanded that their churches must follow strict regulations.

[165] *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Presbyter's Handbook], v.2, p. 79.

[166] *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Presbyter's Handbook], v.1, p. 7.

[167] *Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Presbyter's Handbook], v.2, p. 85.

[168] This was an article by the 'foreigner' P. Rogozin *Dushepopechitelstvo* ('Care of souls') (*Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Pastor's Handbook], v.1, pp. 111-117. But even in this work 'the ministry of the word' is considered as the most important task of any pastor/presbyter (pp. 112-113).

records of negotiations, resolutions, and agreements. The other four parts of the "Presbyter's Handbook" were analogous in both volumes but followed a different order and had different section titles. There were sections in each volume on "Civic issues"[169] and "On the defence of peace". These parts repeated the most prominent materials on these topics starting from the very first *BV* issue in 1945. Two shorter sections were devoted to ecumenical questions and the history of Christianity. Most of what was found in these two volumes added little to what had been produced in *BV*. In respect of the Correspondence Course and other publications, the *BV* writers and editors were crucial in shaping the educational activities of the AUCECB.

f. Conclusion

The educational aim in AUCECB publications was more important than the theological one, although to some extent the latter flowed from the former. There was a desire, in line with evangelical tradition, to provide relevant information for pastors. This chapter has analysed how *BV* attempted to provide biblical knowledge for these ECB pastors, so that issues of behaviour and of church order could be addressed. The material in BCC and other publications has also been examined and evaluated. Given the restrictions of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, it is not surprising that AUCECB educational materials were rare and inadequate. It is hard to imagine how some of what was offered as educational material by the writers in *BV* could be relevant to AUCECB churches. In some cases educational articles had a purely ideological or administrative goal. The evidence brought together in this chapter shows that Christian education offered by the ECB in the pages of *BV* was haphazard and inconsistent. Yet *BV* and its authors were central to the educational task of the AUCECB in the 1950s and 1960s in particular. There was improvement with the launch of BCC in 1968. The urgently needed education was now being supplied in a more systematic way. The dominant group of writers for the BCC, and also for a publication like the "Presbyter's Handbook", was the group responsible for articles in *BV*. But even the new work done in the 1970s and 1980s was limited. In any case, education was not at the heart of the AUCECB enterprise. The real aspirations of Soviet Baptists reached beyond the educational sphere. Education was merely an aid towards reaching the goal of deeper spirituality. The leaders of the ECB struggled to discover how they could use these educational tools in pursuing their heavenly ideals, especially when the authorities put enormous pressure on them to use their publications for ideological ends, as will be seen in the next chapter.

[169] In vol.1. 'Articles on civic issues' in vol. 2.

Chapter 7
Ideological aims

a. Introduction

The Soviet regime was built on the idea of a permanent ideological war between different social classes.[1] There was no possibility of an ideologically neutral position and so any source of information was supposed to carry some mark of ideological correctness and loyalty towards the regime, otherwise it would be considered hostile to Communism. Therefore, any book or film, newspaper or journal, including specific professional periodicals, had to contain at least some ideological insertions. *BV* was no exception to this rule. In the thinking of the Soviet leaders, it had the potential to be a tool for Communist propaganda, influencing evangelical believers within the USSR and abroad. It was for this reasons that *BV* was initially licensed by the authorities. There were very clear ideological aspects in *BV*. However, they require careful analysis, since they consisted not only in promoting certain official standpoints taken by the USSR government but also in looking for a compromise as to how to express state ideology in the periodical's pages. This chapter looks at the propaganda elements to be found in *BV* and then examines two specific topics that were prominent: peace-making and Christian unity. It might be thought that ideological aims were less important for *BV* than theological or educational aims, and this is true in the sense that the AUCECB would not have freely chosen to promote in its publications a certain political ideology, but the ideological aspect was of great importance because the continuing survival of *BV* depended on it being seen by the authorities as supportive of Soviet thinking.

b. The place of ideology

The presence of ideology in publications of the AUCECB made the Union vulnerable. The ideological statements made could be criticised both from the perspective of the Soviet system, if they did not fully follow the Party line, and by believers who saw these same statements as representing compromise. The leaders of the Union, for their part, knew that they had to accept certain compromises in order to secure the survival of the evangelical churches. By doing this they also tried to limit more direct ideological interventions by the

[1] See H. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A critical analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 42-50.

state authorities. Fully realizing that aspects of what they were doing were improper,[2] they nonetheless expected understanding from their readership. This understanding was not only at the level of sympathy but also included discernment. The readers were expected to approach certain articles in *BV* knowing that they were ideological, that they were written according to the rules set out by the authorities, and accepting that it was necessary to learn to read between the lines and not obey some of the prescriptions too literally.[3] The normal practice became that these articles were in a special section of *BV*.

At the same time, to think that AUCECB participation in all state ideological projects was merely a sham is an oversimplification. In spite of Stalin's severe persecution and the continuing oppression in the decades after Stalin, most ECB members never felt real hostility towards the state. Observers from outside the USSR, such as J.C. Pollock, writing in the 1960s, were often surprised by this phenomenon.[4] In part many Russian evangelicals were victims of Soviet propaganda and sincerely believed at least in some aspects of justice in the Communist social agenda and in the peaceful and liberal character of Soviet policy. Thus in the famous propagandistic documentary film *Nischiye dukhom* ("Poor in spirit"), [5] a Baptist girl confesses her readiness to join the Young Communist League as long as she is allowed to preserve her faith. This confession sounds quite plausible. Another example can be found in the testimony of a young Baptist recorded by Nikita Struve, writing in 1967:

> It seems to me that there are many points in common between the Komsomol and the Baptist faith; both aim at the development of moral virtues in mankind. But the Communists have no fear of God whereas the Baptists have, and that explains their greater success.[6]

The stress on "moral virtues" is significant. Apologists for biblical holiness did admit that affirmation of moral standards was to be found in Communism. At the same time, Russian

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[2] I asked several AUCECB leaders of the 1970s, including A. Bichkov , V. Kulikov, W. Mitskevich, Y. Dukhonchenko, and V. Logvinenko, about their view of their participation in ideological projects such as peace-making, and their acceptance of restrictions on church growth and on church ministries. They all said that they understood aspects of their actions to be improper, but considered that they did not have a choice since they were very closely controlled by state organizations.

[3] Since the ideology was a part of any periodical in the USSR the ideological patterns were known to the readers of *BV*. Partly the ideological methods in the Soviet literature were desicribed in M.Geller *Kontsentratsionnyi mir i sovetskaia literatura* [The concentration world and the Soviet literature] (Moscow: MIK, 1996)

[4] E.g. J.C. Pollock, 'In Soviet Central Asia', in *Churchman*, vol. 78 (1964), pp. 211-216; J.W. Lawrence, 'Baptists in Samarkand', in *Frontier*, vol. 6, 7 August 1963, p. 173.

[5] A literal translation would be 'Beggars in spirit', but there is a reference to Matt. 5, the beatitudes.

[6] N.A. Struve, *Christians in contemporary Russia* (Charles Scribner's sons, 1967), p. 236.

evangelicals were accustomed to their marginal role in Soviet society and did not imagine that Soviet advocacy of morality would mean that believers would be regarded favourably. Moreover a certain degree of "suffering" was necessary for them as this was consonant with their understanding of true spirituality. Finally, submission to the state was considered a duty of the Christian.

In writing ideological articles in *BV*, the authors almost always relied upon ideas already developed and accepted by Russian evangelicals as early as the 1920s. They appealed for good relations between evangelicals and Communists, as there had been in the immediate post-revolutionary years, and they also drew inspiration from Prokhanov's social projects. They always tried to combine typical Communist themes with their Bible-based conversion and holiness narratives. The very first volume of *BV*, which was highly ideological, contained a short poem, "For the motherland", by V. Korneeva,[7] obviously designed to be recited during worship services. This poem may be considered as the first devotional item in *BV* and also as the first example of a combined biblical-ideological narrative. This story is a bizarre mixture of the parable of the Prodigal Son and the Soviet story of the fallen hero. The young man of the poem, "beloved by life", is going to war. He is obviously an unbeliever, but his mother (surely a Christian) blesses him before his departure. The attitude of the narrator remains unclear. The myth of the builder of Communism whose happiness in Stalin's socialist paradise was destroyed by World War II contradicts the image of the sinful prodigal son. This contradiction remains unresolved. While away the young man receives fatal injuries. However, just before his death he prays to God "though his mother does not know about this". This part of the story is obviously inspired by a typical scene in Baptist poetry. In the form used in this poem, however, the prodigal is named as a new Alexander Matrosov, a Soviet hero of WWII,[8] and turns out to be a heroic figure who is sacrificing himself, as did Matrosov, though this time not for his unit but "for our common happiness."[9] The story becomes absurd.

This poem by Korneeva was unique, and no similar effort can be found in the later pages of *BV*. Perhaps it demonstrated to the ECB leaders the ultimate impossibility of consistently conflating Soviet ideology with their beliefs. It is possible, however, that the

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[7] V. Korneeva, 'Za rodinu', *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 8.

[8] Alexander Matrosov was a young soldier in WWII who blocked a German machine-gun with his own chest to allow his unit to advance. His image was exploited by Stalin's propaganda, which praised 'the feat of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War'. See N. Davies, *No simple victory: World War II in Europe, 1939-1945 (*Penguin Group, 2008), p. 263.

[9] Korneeva, 'Za rodinu' [For the motherland], p. 8.

AUCECB's ideological project would have been more successful if the state had been interested in using religious resources for promoting its ideology. It is clear that AUCECB leaders were ready to receive and publish material that was ideological in character. But they did not see any practical proposals from the side of the authorities which suggested ways in which religious beliefs might have a proper part to play in Soviet society. So this project was never destined to be part of the convictions of the editors and authors who determined the basic content of *BV*, but was present primarily to satisfy the authorities.

Although the ideological aim in *BV* was not central when compared with the theological and the even more important educational aims, it requires careful analysis. Indeed it is the most complex area of the three to evaluate. In doing this, clearly defined trends can be identified in which ideology permeated publications of *BV*. The earliest trend was a propagandistic one. Its goal consisted, on the one hand, in creating the illusion that believers were faring well in the Soviet Union, a message obviously designed for Western observers, and on the other hand in preventing discontent among ECB members with their daily life in the USSR and so securing loyalty to the state. Propagandistic materials were abundant in the early years of the periodical but they disappeared almost completely in the 1970s and 1980s. The second dimension of the ideological project consisted in seeking the promotion of peace in the world, and support of peace-making efforts. This ideology, which drew something from Prokhanov's pacifism,[10] was included almost exclusively for export. It made no sense to persuade Soviet Baptists to strive to secure "peace in the whole world",[11] as they were powerless to make a difference.

The third aspect of ideology was the ecumenical activity or the project of Christian Unity, and this to the greatest extent harmonized with the real interests of the AUCECB. The ecumenical aim was, however, inseparable from propaganda and peace-making as part of the message being conveyed to other countries. According to the ideological goal defined by the state, the AUCECB had to look like a large and respectable religious organization, taking its place with other religious traditions in the Soviet Union, with the Orthodox Church in the

[10] At the beginning of 1922, Prokhanov issued an address to all the Baptists of the world. In this address he called the believers to sabotage any military activities in their countries. The Soviet government considered that step as provocative and very soon Prokhanov was forced fundamentally to change his attitude to military affairs (Savinsky, Part II, pp. 28-29). It is noteworthy that this episode is not mentioned in the works by Prokhanov's followers like Mitskevich and Shenderovsky. It might mean that Evangelical Christians decided that peace-making did not have any future in the Soviet state. Nevertheless after the WWII the idea of peace-making was successfully developed by ECB leaders.

[11] *Mir vo vsyom mire* is a play on words because the homonyms *mir* in the reformed Russian orthography simultaneously mean 'world' and 'peace'.

front rank. For the AUCECB, however, the most pressing challenge was not wider ecumenism but unity inside the Union. The AUCECB's task was to keep together in the Union different denominational groups which differed significantly from each other. *BV* had to convince its readers of the necessity of AUCECB unity. More widely, the evangelistic visit of Billy Graham to Russia in 1992, which occurred after an official invitation from the Orthodox Patriarch Pimen,[12] and which led to the rapid numerical growth of evangelicals in Russia, compensated the ECB for their ecumenical efforts.[13]

The next sections offer a detailed analysis of propaganda, peace-making and ecumenical activity as presented in *BV*.

c. Propaganda in *BV*

1. Early efforts at propaganda

The presence of propagandistic material was a typical feature in *BV* during Stalin's era and the early Khrushchev years. At this stage it is not difficult to see endeavours being made to help the Communist party in its advance. BV authors quite often raise topics relevant for mainstream. One of the most frequent themes on the pages of *BV* during the early period is the patriotic theme. Patriotism was what the Communist state expected from the AUCECB, as from all citizens and groups. Thus, the journal persuaded believers that their duty was to fight against enemies of the Soviet Union.[14]

To support patriotism (especially in its Soviet form) from the Bible was not an easy task. However, this was what was attempted. The development of the patriotic theme was based on the strategy of pointing to similar traits in characters from the biblical narratives. A common technique was to compare the attitude of a Christian patriot to his motherland with the love of Israel presented in the Bible. An example of a patriotic theme can be found in an

[12] This invitation was received during his previous visits to the USSR: see V.I. Kadaeva,, 'Prebyvanie Billi Greema v nashei strane' [Billy Graham in our country], *BV*, vol. 4 (1988), p. 30.

[13] Before that in 1988, as part of the 1,000-year celebrations of Christianity in Russia, Graham addressed leading Russian Orthodox Church clergy, other religious leaders, and government figures at the main Orthodox jubilee observances at the Bolshoi theatre in Moscow. He preached to very large crowds in Baptist and Orthodox churches, including up to 15,000 people at St. Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev. But the most important event in the history of his visits to Russia was his evangelical campaign in 1992. Many thousands of people were converted that time and it led to a rapid growth of churches in European parts of Russia.

[14] It is noteworthy that a straightforward appeal to serve in the Red Army appeared in the third issue of *BV*, published after the end of World War II.

article in 1945, by an unknown author,[15] under the title "The Christian and the motherland".[16] Here is a sample of the patriotic rhetoric employed:

> Some believers think that patriotism and Christianity are incompatible, that a good Christian cannot be a fervent patriot. Why such a misunderstanding! Does the Bible teach us this? No. Every Christian should know that God gave him not only the heavenly homeland but also the earthly motherland. What does Christ say? He loved the whole world, all the peoples, all of humanity, but his special love was to his native Israeli people. When sending out his disciples, Christ exhorts them to 'go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Mt.10:6). Looking at Jerusalem and moved by a great love for his people, Christ wept (Lk.19:41).
>
> And what did the greatest disciple of Christ, the Apostle Paul, say? 'For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh' (Rom. 9:3 - 4). What a love for his people![17]

Having convinced his readers that the principle of patriotism is holy the author moves to practical outcomes:

> We need to love our motherland in practice. What does this mean? It means to conscientiously obey the laws and regulations of the government which serves the country to the best of its ability. Service to the motherland means honest service in the army. There can be no doubt about this. A Christian, who loves his motherland, should defend it with a weapon in his hands. The sincere desire of any Christian soldier is to become like the centurion from Capernaum (Mt.8:5-10) and Cornelius from Caesarea (Act.10:1-2).[18]

The answer to the question "how should we be good patriots?" is a literal repetition of what readers knew from the official media. The appeal to governmental propaganda in support of this kind of teaching was typical. In subsequent years this kind of propaganda in *BV* touched on a broad range of issues.

Although propaganda played an important role in the publications of 1946 and 1947, what might be termed "official" articles were few, usually short, and very practical. The propagandistic part in 1946 consists of three articles written by Vera Shcheglova and devoted to the anniversary of V-Day,[19] to collecting money for orphans,[20] and to Soviet Constitution Day,[21] as well as several official informational notes. The Bible was not used in the articles by Shcheglova. The issues of *BV* in 1947 contain a great deal of material devoted to

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[15] Possibly it was Y. Zhidkov. Later 'patriotic' articles, as a rule, were signed by him.

[16] 'Khristianin i rodina' [The Christian and the Motherland], *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 4.

[17] Ibid., p. 4.

[18] Ibid. p. 5.

[19] V. Shcheglova, 'Groza proshla, snova siiaiet solntse' [The thunderstorm is over. The sun is shining again], *BV*, vol. 3 (1946), p. 5.

[20] V. Shcheglova, 'Pomozhem sirotam!' [Let us help orphans], *BV*, vol. 5 (1946), p. 4.

[21] V. Shcheglova, V., 'Osnovnoi zakon SSSR' [The main law of the USSR], *BV*, vol. 6 (1946), p.5.

demonstrating the loyalty of believers to the Soviet state. The editorial board was endeavouring to present believers as model members of the socialist society. Most of the issues start with official correspondence with CARC connected with Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Authors called readers to work self-sacrificially.[22] The worker Nedoves, who was awarded the Stalin Prize, was used as an example of Christian heroes of Communist Labour.[23]

Baptists participated together with all Soviet people in the celebration in 1947 of the 800th anniversary of the founding of Moscow.[24] But along with wider Russian history, the story of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in Russia was not neglected. However, evangelical believers were depicted as, first, patriots whose faith was rooted in the national character of the Slavic people, and, second, as victims of Tsarism.[25] For obvious reasons, authors concentrated their attention mostly on the pre-Communist period of Russian Baptist history. Alongside affirming the Soviet regime over against Tsarism, *BV* in 1947 condemned "slanderers", human rights activists from Western countries who blamed the Soviet government for its oppression of religion. For example, issue no. 4 contained an open letter from the AUCECB to the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Congress in Copenhagen (31 July-2 August 1947) in which representatives of the AUCECB refused – as a result of state intervention - to accept an invitation to the congress.[26] The authors explained that they disagreed with congress organizers who "consider Communism as an obstacle to the evangelization of the world".[27] They wrote:

> Some speeches during the Congress could possibly be aimed against the USSR. This is the state of which we are citizens and the state where Communism is the life priority for all Soviet people. Also Russian Baptists do not consider Communism to

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[22] V. Shcheglova, 'Nash trud dl'a rodiny' [Our work for the motherland], *BV*, vol. 1(1947), p. 11, and also 'Dva goda mira' [Two years of peace], *BV*, vol. 3 (1947), p. 4.

[23] 'Lauriatu stalinskoi premii' [To the laureate of the Stalin Prize], *BV*, vol. 1 (1947), p. 71.

[24] V. Shcheglova, 'K 800-letiiu Moskvy' [To the 800th anniversary of Moscow], *BV*, vol. 4 (1947), p. 3.

[25]The official reason for these publications was the 80th anniversary of Baptists in Russia. The movement, as is usually agreed, began with the baptism of N. Voronin by the German Baptist M. Kalweit. See 'Iz istorii russkogo evangel'sko-baptistskogo dvizheniia v SSSR' [From the history of the Evangelical-Baptist movement in the USSR], *BV*, vol.5 (1947), p. 4.

[26] 'Rukovodiaschemu komitetu 7 vsemirnogo soveta baptistov' [To the Executive Committee of the 7th Baptist World Congress], *BV*, vol. 4 (1947), p. 7.

[27] Ibid.

> be an impediment to evangelism but they fully share its social and economic principles as being in accord with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.[28]

Perhaps the most unusual article in this period defending Stalin's brand of Communism from the biblical point of view was an article in 1947 authored by Zhidkov, "The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Great October Revolution".[29] The author tried to present socialism as the fulfilment of gospel teachings. He starts with the claim that believers "must submit themselves to the governing authorities", according to Rom. 13:1-5 and Mt. 22:21. Then he seeks to demonstrate the advantages that socialism has brought to Russian Christians:

> The October Revolution eliminated any kind of parasitism and exploitation and gave opportunity to the people not only to be industrious but to be devotees of labour, heroes of labour…and thus fulfilled the slogan of the New Testament 'if a man will not work, he shall not eat' (2 Thes.3:10)…
>
> The October Revolution removed hatred between people of different nations and different religions… It is in the spirit of the New Testament 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3: 28).[30]

Zhidkov expounds a number of verses such as James 5:1-5 and Luke 4:6 that praise being poor and rebuke riches.[31] Finally, he claims that "Revelation (18:1-21) predicts the fall of 'Babylon the Great'", which he takes to be a picture of capitalists made rich by world trade.[32] According to this interpretation, the success of the Soviet regime was the fulfilment of biblical prophecies (he quotes Dan.2:21; 4:14), so the USSR has a place at the head of "all people aspiring to freedom, peace, social and political justice."[33] This article was a rather bizarre attempt to forge a close alliance with the Communists. It was not an attempt which was repeated.

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[28] Ibid. Certain documents from ACECB archive (such as the translation of the agenda of the 7th Baptist World Congress) show that the leaders of the Union were planning to visit Copenhagen but the authorities never gave them permission.

[29] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Tridtstaia godovschina Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi Revoliutsii' [Thirtieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution], *BV*, vol. 6 (1947), p. 4.

[30] Ibid., p. 5. He also quotes Col. 3:11.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 6.

2. Church and Society

After Stalin's death in 1953, much of the ideological energy in *BV* was concentrated on peace-making, while other topics that contained propaganda were relatively few. Also, when authors in the later 1950s and 1960s touched on the themes of church-state relationships or of work in a socialist society, they proposed no ideas that were unacceptable to traditional Baptist theology. For example, writing about their attitude towards church and state, authors relied on a basic Baptist principle, namely to keep these separate. The propagandistic character of such articles can be seen as the smoothing off of sharp edges. Naturally, any criticism of the existing social order, state atheism, or persecution of religion was impossible on the pages of *BV*. At the same time, the publishers did not make too obvious attempts to impress the authorities. They simply avoided covering issues that were contentious. It is significant that no propagandistic articles other than those devoted to peace-making appeared on the pages of *BV* in the period of Khrushchev's campaign against religion (1954-1964), when it might have been thought that *BV* could have included articles portraying it (to the authorities) in a favourable light.

There were three important articles devoted to the relations between church and state in this period.[34] In a 1953 article, "Anniversary of the separation of Church and State",[35] I. Motorin made a point of noting the positive results of the October Revolution.[36] He seeks to show from the Scriptures that the essence of the spiritual community of Jesus Christ is incompatible with that community having state power.[37] According to Motorin, in the history of humankind after the third century[38] "every state has used religion for its own end, and state churches have justified exploitation and social injustice". But Motorin applauds the USSR, "which manages without either church or religion".[39] Therefore, paradoxically, state atheism gains an almost sacred significance in its "purification of the society" from the "blood of the

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[34] There was another article, 'What was and what is now', to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the USSR ('Chto bylo i cho iest'' [What was and what is now], *BV*, vol. 5 (1967), p. 4. This anonymous article lists the achievements of the Communist regime. But this article does not contain any biblical references and was possibly written by an unbeliever.

[35] I. Motorin, 'Godovschina otdeleniia tserkvi ot gosudarstva' [Anniversary of the separation of Church and state], *BV*, vol. 2-3 (1953), p.8.

[36] The article was timed to coincide with the 36th anniversary of the Communist Revolution in Russia. The decree of the separation of the Church from the state was issued on 24.01.1918.

[37] He used such texts as Acts 1:7; Luke 17:20-21; John 4:21-24; 18:36.

[38] The author's language here is not precise.

[39] I. Motorin, 'Godovschina otdeleniia tserkvi ot gosudarstva' [Anniversary of the separation of Church and state], *BV*, vol. 2-3 (1953), p. 8, p. 10.

prophets and saints".[40] Indeed, forceful secularization as implemented in the Communist society could be considered as a proper fulfilment of the traditional "biblical" Baptist principle of the separation of Church and State.[41] This statement was hardly likely to be convincing to those who had suffered at the hands of the state.

Motorin continued this theme fifteen years later in the article "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's".[42] There is a marked change in tone in this article, however, compared to the first. There is no praise for the October Revolution. The article calls, rather, for tolerance toward the Communist regime. Motorin argues that Christians in the New Testament did not have full freedom to confess their faith. Despite this, many heroes in the Bible not only avoided illegal activities but also were good citizens of their countries.[43] The author criticizes those believers who demand rights to open Sunday schools, women's clubs, and other church-related groups and activities. Motorin's answer to such Christians is that "they refuse to understand that during the apostolic Christian times Sunday schools for children, youth and women's meetings did not exist. Nevertheless, the word of God spread and the number of believers increased. It is written in the Apocalypse of John: 'These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut' (Rev. 3:7, [AV]). Doors of preaching the Gospel are open in our country and we have the opportunity to gather in houses of prayer and to satisfy our religious needs. The Lord has opened these doors and the Soviet law provides religious services for all citizen believers."[44]

Finally, a significant article was written by A. Karev, "The Christian and the Motherland", which was prepared for the 40th Congress of the AUCECB in 1969.[45] It seems that Karev was seeking to draw together all the patriotic themes touched on since 1945. The article revives topics that had largely disappeared from view in *BV*: Karev reminded readers about the great culture of Russia,[46] praised the Communist Revolution[47] and the

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Of course, Motorin has difficulties here. State atheism surely offends the separation of state and religion for such a creed is surely para-religious to say the least.

[42] I.I. Motorin, 'Otdavaite kesarevo kesariu, a bozhiie Bogu' [Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's], *BV*, vol. 2 (1968), p. 49.

[43] Among others, Motorin proposed the examples of Paul and Daniel as model citizens (Ibid.).

[44] Ibid., p. 53.

[45] A.V. Karev, 'Khristianin i rodina' [The Christian and the Motherland], *BV*, vol. 3 (1970), p. 37.

[46] Ibid., p. 50.

[47] Ibid., p. 49.

achievements of the Soviet people in the post-revolutionary years,[48] and included the love of Jesus for his nation and the call to industrious work.[49] The authorities could not have asked for more.[50]

Often the authors of propagandistic articles in *BV*, like Karev, tried to find biblical support for Communist values. This was especially apparent in the articles devoted to work. A short article written by M. Orlov in 1995 is an example of such an interpretation of the Bible. The article is entitled "Christ and Labour".[51] It is interesting that in this short article the author does not refer to Communist society. He praises work as an eternal virtue, the example of which was revealed in Christ himself who worked hard in his social and spiritual career.[52] Orlov calls his readers to "do their best to present themselves to God as those approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed."[53] To reach the state of such a "workman", the author advises his readers "to be pleasant to four pairs of eyes": to the worker himself/herself, to consumers of the fruit of the work, to supervisors, and to God.[54]

A similar article was published in 1956. It was by N.K. (undoubtedly N. Konoplev) and was entitled "Work and prayer".[55] Work is presented as beneficial for the meditative and contemplative Christian life. Labour has value *per se* because it leads to a better knowledge of God. The author here refers to three modes of divine revelation: through the Bible, through human experience, and through nature.[56] Work, in his opinion, helps people to come to God. Developing this idea, the author comes very close to pantheism, advocating the notion of *anima mundi* (though in quite a strange way). He writes: "The struggle in overcoming the barriers that separate our soul and the World Soul (consisting of the souls of all human beings that are alive or that have ever lived) should be our leader on our journey. In this case we will fulfil the commandment of Christ expressed through the mouth of the old Evangelist John:

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[48] Ibid., p. 50.

[49] Ibid., p. 52.

[50] The Estonian ECB leadership declined to discuss this paper, T. Pilli, *Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), p. 63, stating that it did not affect their republic.

[51] M. Orlov, 'Khristos i trud' [Christ and Labour], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 64.

[52] Ibid., p. 64.

[53] 2 Tim. 2:15.

[54] Ibid., p. 64.

[55] N.K., 'Trud i molitva', *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1956), p. 71.

[56] See 'Vsem obshchinam evangel'skikh khristian i baptistov v SSSR' [To all congregations of the Evangelical Christian-Baptists in the USSR], *BV*, vol. 5 (1955), p. 3.

'Dear friends, let us love one another … because God is love' (1John 4:7-8)."[57] It is noteworthy that the author, even though writing on the topic of work, omits the ideological stock phrases that were frequent in similar articles in *BV* during the 1940s. It seems that in this instance the author sincerely believes in what he writes about life in the world.

3. Sincere convictions

Although the number of propagandistic articles in *BV* significantly reduced after 1971, they did not disappear completely. But at the same time, the difference between pure ideology and issues of church edification became blurred. After the late 1960s, it seems that the authors of *BV* never wrote simply at the bidding of Communists. Their writings might contain some propagandistic elements but, in general, they were built upon their sincere convictions. Articles with an ideological bias might appear in *BV* if they were related to a specific event in the life of the AUCECB. Since there was no special place in the periodical for such articles, the editorial board, as a rule, placed them in the information section.

A theme attracting considerable attention in the 1970s was that of military service. The attention given to this question shows that by this time Baptist churches had enough young men for whom this issue was important. In an article "How the Holy Scriptures explain the issue of the attitude of believers to military service",[58] A. Mitskevich presented a thorough argument for the necessity of military service. Pacifism, he sought to show, had never been part of the doctrine of the Russian Baptist movement. To prove his point, Mitskevich referred to decisions of the Congress of Baptists in 1926 and of the Congress of Pentecostals in 1927.[59] But, naturally, his most substantial argument was based upon the Bible. First of all, Mitskevich argued that the commandment "thou shall not murder" did not include cases of judicial punishment in the Bible.[60] He then lists multiple examples of military actions of biblical heroes in the Old Testament, as well as some in the New

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[57] N.K., 'Trud i molitva' [Work and prayer], p. 72.

[58] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Kak osveschaiet Slovo Bozhiie vopros ob otnoshenii veruiushchikh k voiennoi sluzhbie' [How the Holy Scriptures explain the issue of the attitude of believers to military service], *BV*, vol. 3 (1971), p. 66.

[59] Ibid., pp. 70-71. The decision of the 1926 Congress referred to Baptist materials issued in 1906, long before the victory of Communism in Russia. Basing the 1926 decision on this earlier document meant that the Baptist acceptance of military service could be said to be freely chosen, not forced on them by authorities.

[60] The difficulty with this commandment consists in the total absence in the Russian language of an appropriate word for 'murder' in the forensic sense in this word. So this commandment is translated in Russian as 'do not take life from any human being' and, therefore, has been used as a platform for pacifism.

Testament.[61] Finally Mitskevich refutes typical "wrong" understandings of basic pacifist texts of the Bible, using the idea of distinguishing between the social and personal aspects of the prohibition to kill. For example, he claims that in the statement "Love your enemy" (Mt. 5:44) Jesus meant "a personal enemy" but not "an enemy of the society".[62]

In 1974 an article by N. Kolesnikov, "About bringing up believers to have the right attitude to their Christian duties",[63] was published on the eve of the AUCECB Congress which took place that year. Its purpose was to propose topics for the official, ideological part of the Congress.[64] Although the article was focused on the usual propagandistic themes of obedience to church officials and state authorities, there were traits that distinguished it from analogous articles of previous periods. The author put forward certain democratic ideas. Thus, he does not only insist on obedience to superintendents, pastors, and deacons, but also stresses that ministers have responsibilities and have to earn the right to be over the believers.[65] He calls Christian youth to restrict their enthusiasm. However, he does not want to extinguish the initiatives of young Christians but urges them to be careful in their actions.[66] This important article indicated how innovative ideas could be introduced in subtle ways.

The AUCECB could not ignore the 60th anniversary of the Great October Revolution,[67] and *BV* published a short anonymous article in issue no. 5 in 1977, "60 years of great change".[68] Praise for the Soviet power in the article is reserved, and the article concerns itself primarily with the question of a "fair distribution of national income".[69] Even the obvious adulation of the phrase - "we approve and support our government in all good

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[61] Ibid., pp. 67-69.

[62] Ibid., pp. 69.

[63] N.V. Kolesnikov, 'Ob vospitanii veruiuschikh v pravil'nom otnoshenii k svoim khristianskim obiazanostiam' [About bringing up believers to have the right attitude to their Christian duties], *BV*, vol. 3 (1974), p. 68.

[64] Ibid.

[65] For example, Kolesnikov openly points to the fact that 'some superintendents did not have previous pastoral experience' (this was especially true in regard to the superintendents recommended by the CARC), so they might err in their demands (Ibid. p.71).

[66] Kolesnikov writes that 'the young believers are like spring water (after the snow has melted). Their energy and strength does not have limits so sometimes it may bring harm instead of good' (Ibid., p.72).

[67] In general, *BV* was not too concerned with state holidays in the 1970s. For example, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War (World War II) produced just a short report about services in the Moscow Church ('Pamiati podviga narodnogo' [In memory of the people's exploit], *BV*, vol. 3 (1975), p.7). In 1980 the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth was ignored.

[68] 'Shestidesiatiletiie velikikh peremen' [60 years of great change], *BV*, vol. 5 (1977), p. 7.

[69] Ibid.

initiatives directed to raising the standards of life for our people"[70] - sounded somewhat ambiguous.[71]

In 1981 there was a slight growth of propagandistic rhetoric within the AUCECB.[72] The ideological elements in *BV* are interspersed between informational materials to a much greater extent in 1981-1982 than in previous and subsequent years. No doubt, this trend was connected to the challenges of the 26th Congress of the CPSU that took place in 1981.[73] But the increased number of ideological comments did not signify that the position of the AUCECB in the USSR had worsened. Quite the opposite; officially Baptists were being given the highest level of recognition by the state since the beginning of their history. They were seen as those who had a positive influence on their Western partners. Also, official state ideologists were questioning the traditional slogans of Communist propaganda. People did not want to follow the moral standards of the Communist model. At the same time, Baptists who showed that they embodied the ideal propagated by Communists attracted the attention of official ideologists in the final years of the Soviet Union.[74] In its turn, the AUCECB also had hopes of strengthening its position in society.

So the increased ideological activity in the early 1980s was deliberate. Comprehending the special significance of the AUCECB for the Soviet authorities, the leaders of the Union felt obliged to participate actively in the life of the society. At the same time, such an active position meant that the AUCECB leadership secured greater freedom for participants in official Union life. As a result, the ideological articles of the later period were not just an official message expressed through the mouths of believers. They resemble endeavours to propose to the official ideology the social doctrine acceptable to Russian

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[70] Ibid.

[71] It might suggest that contemporary standards of life were not satisfactory and that the steps taken by the government were not always directed to improving the situation.

[72] It is especially conspicuous in the materials of the Plenum of 1981 many points of which, such as the demonstration of religious freedom in the USSR, rebukes to the CCECB, support of Brezhnev's foreign policy, were obviously tainted by ideological pressure. The 'Presbyter's Handbook' (*Nastol'naia kniga presvitera* [Presbyter's Handbook] (v.1, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1982) (v.2, Moscow: VSEKhB, 1987) considered in the previous chapter reproduced all the ideological articles starting from 1945.

[73] *XXVI s'ezd KPSS: Stenograficheskii otchet* [The XXVI Congress of the CPSU: verbatim report] (Moscow: IPL, 1981).

[74] For example: 'It is time to start a broad collaboration with believers [Baptists - A.P.] in the ideological and political sphere. This collaboration should rely upon their interest in the life of the modern society, their craving for social and political knowledge, their respect for science and culture" (*Ateizm i religiia: voprosy i otvety* [Atheism and religion: questions and answers] (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), p. 61).

evangelicals. By this time ECB aimed (though they were not optimistic) at receiving concessions from the state and a more general acceptance of the place of evangelical values.

The most prominent work devoted to social issues from this period is an address written by I. Bukatyi under the title "Christians and society".[75] This work was prepared for the AUCECB Plenum that took place in June of 1981,[76] and it summarizes the social doctrine of the ECB that had been developing over the previous 20 years.[77] Although this work contains some phrases from ideological templates of previous years,[78] its main argument is independent of state ideology. In Bukatyi's opinion, the source of good social behaviour by any individual is his or her Christian conversion. He offers his own recipe for the socialist dream of "creating a new human":[79] "when Christ governs a human life he arouses new interests, new ideals, so human life becomes perfect both in family and in society."[80] Thus, believers are presented not as marginal elements but as in the vanguard of society. Describing social relationships, the author gives priority to the family and not to work collectives. This stance contradicted traditional Communist ideology.[81] He describes the family as a foundation stone for the growth of social morality, which defines the development of any people. The conclusion of the author is as follows: "Christians obey existing laws but in their lives they surpass these laws."[82] This article demonstrates the increasing tendency in *BV* to utilize propaganda (that is, the system of statements imposed from outside) so that the role of Christians as good citizens was understood within the ECB as one of the spiritual virtues.

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[75] Bukatyi, 'Khristianin i obschestvo', *BV*, vol. 2 (1981), p. 59.

[76] 'Materialy plenuma VSEKhB (Iiun' 1981 goda)' [Materials of the plenum of the AUCECB (June, 1981)], *BV*, vol. 5 (1981), p. 52. The paper was not read during the Plenum, possibly because, for some reason, Bukaty was not able to attend.

[77] The social doctrine was presented primarily in the works of A. Mitskevich: see A.I. Mitskevich, 'Vsemirnaia konferentsiia po voprosu "Tserkov' i obschestvo"' [The World Conference "Church and society"], *BV*, vol. 1 (1967), p. 13; 'Khristianin i obschestvo' [The Christian and society], *BV*, vol. 1 (1979), p. 36.

[78] For instance, 'believers along with all citizens equally participate in work for the good of neighbours and the society'; 'hundreds of thousands of Christians in our country have the right to preach the Gospel freely and fearlessly'.

[79] To 'create a new human' was a common ideological slogan of 'developed socialism'.

[80] Bukatyi, 'Khristianin i obschestvo' [The Christian and society], p.64.

[81] See *Evoliutsiia sem'i i semeinaia politika SSSR* [The Evolution of family and family policy in the USSR] (Ed. A.G. Vishnevskii, Moscow: Nauka, 1992), pp. 34-42.

[82] The logic of the author follows the structure of one of Billy Graham's sermons, published in 1977 in Russian under the title 'Social obligations of a Christian': 'Obschestvennyie obiazanosti khristianina' [Social obligations of a Christian], *BV*, vol. 5 (1977), p. 60. Graham called for loyalty and positive cooperation with any government, and this did not encounter objections from the CARC.

d. Peace-making

Peace-making in its pro-governmental form became one of the most important themes in *BV*. Historically the theology of peace-making was never a crucial issue for Russian Baptists.[83] Pacifism was part of the tradition of groups like the Mennonites, but in those congregations pacifism was directed to separation from the secular "world". One of the greatest objections to military service was that it contradicted the commandment of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. But most Evangelical Christian and Baptist members in the Soviet Union had never been fully pacifist.[84] It was well known in some circles that the most important sponsor of the Russian Baptist Union, Dei Mazayev, had killed intruders to defend his private property in 1917.[85] During the Civil War evangelical believers were exempt from military service, but a number of leaders, including I. Kargel, did not support this. The number of young men who pretended to convert in order to escape from the army worried the leaders of the evangelical movement. In practice, pacifism was a matter of personal decision, though the question was sometimes the subject of fervent debate. After Prokhanov's pacifism was abandoned, a group of leaders, including Prokhanov himself, published in the state press in 1923 an article which claimed that pacifism was not part of evangelical identity. This provoked a split in the Moscow congregation of Evangelical Christians.[86] In any case, the pacifism of the Soviet evangelicals had nothing in common with peace-making as a state enterprise.

Although officially the AUCECB leadership proclaimed peace-making among its priorities, as Sawatsky notes "actually the role of the Russian Baptists in the peace movement has been minimal. It might best be described as passively allowing the Orthodox Church to take the lead, merely demonstrating support with its presence."[87] Peace-making was not a theme that a Baptist preacher would have chosen willingly as a topic for a sermon. As a result, theoretical articles on peace-making were written without great conviction. Usually they were timed to a certain event.[88] The very first article in *BV* on peace-making was an

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[83] See W. Kolarz, *Religion in the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, c1961; London: Macmillan and Co., 1961), pp. 317-320.

[84] Paul R. Dekar, in *For the Healing of the Nations: Baptist Peacemakers* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth and Kelwys, 1993), p. 83, talks about Russian Baptist pacifist beliefs.

[85] Mitskevich, p. 216.

[86] See 'PoslaniieVisshego Sovieta' [Message of the Supreme Council], in *Izvestiia* 12.08.1923. Prokhanov was forced to sign this proclamation after his failure to establish his pacifist position in 1922 (see earlier).

[87] Sawatsky, p. 126.

[88] Often comments on peace-making can be found in reports of peace-making events and in official documents produced by organizations other than the AUCECB.

article written in 1953 by E.Zh,[89] "The fight of women for their rights and peace."[90] The author mentions the World Congress of Women,[91] which was then being promoted. This promotion was obviously the reason for writing the article. The article mostly consists of a list of negative attitudes towards women in capitalist countries. The Bible is referred to in the article when the author explains the unfair treatment of women outside of the USSR as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve. The examples mention only other countries and do not criticize Soviet treatment of women. In general, the article offers the impression of a text written as a result of an ideological demand, without any consistency or logical order.[92]

The second issue of *BV* in 1953 contained an article written by N. Tsunenko, "Seek peace and pursue it."[93] The article proposes a more substantial ideology of peace-making. Tsunenko starts his argument by quoting 1Peter 3:10-11, which underlines, in his opinion, that peace-making is one of the main Christian virtues. He describes the struggle for peace, in vivid terms, as the most important thing for the whole of humankind:

> Together let us bind the monster of war! Let us stop its existence! … It is enough to sacrifice to this beast youth and joy, the bread and butter of workers, the sweat and toil of peasants. It is enough to give the roses of childhood to this beast. Away with this beast! Such is the will of all the fighters for peace; such is the will of God himself.[94]

The logic of the absolute value of peace-making leads the author to the paradoxical conclusion that the Soviet Union, "which from the first day of its birth carries the banner of peace",[95] in spite of its atheistic ideology, actually fulfils the will of God, while the Western democracies, with their Christian traditions, are God's enemies:

> Our country in practice seeks peace for all the nations and makes peace, and this is higher than any empty religious system. The Lord will judge according to deeds not

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[89] The author is unknown. Possibly it was one of the female relatives of Y. Zhidkov.

[90] E.Zh., 'Bor'ba zhenschin za ikh prava i mir' [The fight of women for their rights and peace], *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), p. 20.

[91] This was the congress of *Fédération démocratique internationale des femmes* that took place in Copenhagen in 1953.

[92] Here is a sample from the text: 'Most of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union are women. They all alongside with other women joyfully work at plants, collective farms, hospitals and other missions without any discrimination. Female believers in our country pray to God that the modern struggle of women for their rights and peace will be successful.' (Ibid. p. 22).

[93] N. Tsunenko, 'Ischi mira i stremis' k nemu' [Seek peace and pursue it], *BV*, vol. 2-3 (1953), p. 5.

[94] Ibid

[95] Ibid.

> religions. And God will give to each person according to what he has done. A man reaps what he sows.[96]

The editorial in *BV* no. 1 (1957)[97] is less categorical. It raises the question: What can churches do practically for peace-making? It is clear from what the authors write that they believe that peace "should be forcefully advancing".[98] But what is the nature of this force? The reply of the article is the following: "Every church should restrain from pouring oil on the fire of hatred… On the contrary, the Church should use its influence to extinguish all fires or even sparks of hatred wherever they appear in humankind. Finally, the Church of Christ as a whole[99] should start preaching ideas of peace and disarmament."[100] Also in 1957, Zhidkov wrote "Let us choose life and blessing".[101] The reference was to the Deuteronomist theology of blessing and curse.[102] In this article the way of the curse is presented as the way of militarism. The leaders of capitalist countries are on this sinful path because of "their love of money which is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).[103] Indeed, "making money from war or from weapon production makes people involved in the military industry wish for international contentions and quarrels".[104] The way of the curse is contrasted in the article to the way of blessing of a peaceful use of atomic energy:

> Atomic cars soon will run in the streets of our cities, and atomic jets will make noise above our heads. Atomic technique will transfigure all spheres of our life. If atomic energy can be used for death, it can be used in medicine to destroy harmful germs… Is it not the way of life, the way of blessing?[105]

The activity of the Church in peace-making was the topic of another editorial in *BV* no. 3 (1958), with the title "The Church should be a herald of peace."[106] The article is written as a refutation of the opinion that peace-making is a secular activity and need not be conducted by Christians. It was the first of a series of similar articles that apparently reflected

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[96] Ibid.

[97] 'Mir prezhde vsego' [Peace is above all], *BV*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 3.

[98] Here there is a quotation from Mt. 11:12. The authors almost equate peace and the Kingdom of God.

[99] A reference to the participation of the AUCECB in ecumenical peace-making organizations.

[100] Ibid., p. 3

[101] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Izberem zhizn' i blagosloveniie' [Let us choose life and blessing], *BV*, vol. 2 (1957), p. 5.

[102] The article is based upon Dt. 30:19-20.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] 'Tserkov' Khrista dolzhna byt' glashataiem mira' [The Church should be a herald of peace], *BV*, vol. 3 (1958), p. 3.

criticisms being made by certain believers who were unhappy when peace-making became almost the main activity of the leaders of the Union and a great part of the AUCECB budget was spent on secular diplomacy. Defending its position, the editorial board claims that "it is impossible to make a division between Christ and the secular world."[107] The authors speak of the episode where Christ wept about the future destruction of Jerusalem and admonish readers to "gain the heart of Christ full of love and compassion toward all humankind".[108] This was followed by articles on "The voice of the church for peace should be louder than all other voices",[109] and "Peace-making activity is a sacred duty of all Christian churches."[110] Christians, according to the authors, are obliged to be peacemakers because this involved witness to authorities,[111] showing mercy,[112] and evangelism.[113]

The theme is raised again in an article in 1960, "The duty of Christian churches is to preach the idea of peaceful coexistence."[114] The title itself reveals the content of the article. There is a particularly strong ideological bias in this article. It openly proclaims that "all churches of the world should accept the unique idea of complete disarmament proposed by the government of the USSR to all nations of the world as their sacred idea".[115] Promotion of "the peaceful policy of the Soviet Union" for a Christian means to be "the salt of the earth and light of the world (Mt. 5:13-14)."[116] The "peaceful policy of the Soviet Union" mentioned in this article is an obvious reference to Khrushchev's initiatives at the United Nations General Assembly in September-October, 1960.[117] His initiatives were presented in Communist propaganda as a bold stand against the destructive forces of the bourgeois world.

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

[109] 'Golos tserkvi za mir dolzhen byt' gromche vsekh drugikh golosov' [The voice of the church for peace should be louder than all other voices], *BV*, vol. 4 (1958), p. 3.

[110] 'Deiatelnost' v zaschitu mira – sviaschennaia obiazanost' vsekh khristianskikh tserkvei' [Peace-making activity is a sacred duty of all Christian churches], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 4.

[111] 'Golos tserkvi za mir dolzhen byt' gromche vsekh drugikh golosov' [The voice of the church for peace should be louder than all other voices], *BV*, vol. 4 (1958), p. 3.

[112] Ibid.

[113] 'Deiatelnost' v zaschitu mira – sviaschennaia obiazanost' vsekh khristianskikh tserkvei' [Peace-making activity is a sacred duty of all Christian churches], p. 4.

[114] 'Dolg khristianskikh tserkvei – propovedovat' ideiu mirnogo sosuschestvovaniia' [The duty of Christian churches is to preach the idea of peaceful coexistence], *BV*, vol. 3 (1960), p. 3.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Information about this event can be found in H. Macmillan, *Pointing the Way/ 1959-1961* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 279.

The same theme was repeated in the next issue of *BV* under the title "Peace",[118] which presented a poetic description of the advantages of peace as it was proposed by the Soviet government.

An interesting article in 1961 under the title "Christianity and the Cold War"[119] was directed against those Christians who "let themselves be involved in the split between the West and the East."[120] It is clear that the article was written to criticize anti-Communist Christian organizations like the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade.[121] In the opinion of the author, Christians have no right to be involved in any activity against those whom they see as their ideological enemies (i.e. Communists). The biblical arguments for the author's point stem from two passages, Luke 9:55 and Mt. 5:25. The article compares the Christian critics of Communism with the Apostles whom Jesus rebuked for their intention to bid fire from heaven to consume the villages that did not receive them. It reminds such Christians of the words of Christ: "You do not know of which spirit you are". Also the article interprets the phrase "agree with thine adversary quickly" as directed to representatives of different political systems who had to come to a certain agreement to prevent the horror of an impending nuclear cataclysm.[122]

During the last years of Khrushchev's rule in the USSR, articles on peace-making appeared frequently in *BV*.[123] The Bible was often used in these articles. Almost any occurrence of the word "peace" was interpreted in a political way, with little regard for context, and it is hard to find any consistent theology of peace-making other than emotional exclamations like "Peace without war and armament! What a happiness it is!"[124] Approval of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union was a common element in the peace-making articles. An article written by N. Konopl'ov, "About peace in the whole world", is typical of that period.[125] This article starts with short commentaries on certain passages from the Old

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[118] 'Mir' [Peace], *BV*, vol. 4 (1960), p. 3.

[119] 'Khristianstvo i kholodnaia voina' [Christianity and the Cold War], *BV*, vol. 2 (1961), p. 6.

[120] Ibid.

[121] The article claims that 'the idea of crusades was condemned by true Christianity a long time ago' and, therefore, it should not be used in the Christian press concerning the relations between two rival social systems (Ibid.).

[122] Ibid.

[123] For example, one issue of *BV*, vol. 3 (1961) contained three articles on peace-making besides information about peace-making events.

[124] V.G. Kulikov, 'Mir – zolotaia mechta chelovechestva' [Peace is the golden dream of humankind], *BV*, vol. 3 (1961), p. 40.

[125] N. Konopl'ev, 'O mire vo vsem mire' [About peace in the whole world], *BV*, vol. 3 (1961), p. 6.

Testament which contain the word “peace”: e.g. Lev. 26:3; Prov. 17:1; Isaiah 57:19. Then it moves to the New Testament in which “the teachings of Christ caused human souls to shine, inspired them to something new hidden in the depth of the hearts of the people and that now has blossomed with the splendid flowers of the brethren’s solidarity and peace.”[126] The teaching of peace, in the author’s opinion, can be found in such words of Christ as “when you enter a house greet them with the words: peace to this house” (Mt. 10:12); “be at peace one with another” (Mk. 9:50); “peace I leave with you” (John. 14:27).[127] The same teaching was supported by the apostles: “the Spirit is love, joy, peace” (Gal. 5:22); “God is not `a God' of confusion, but of peace” (1Cor. 14:33).[128] In conclusion, Konoplov claims: “The world of capitalism and the world of socialism coexist … Both of these camps should strive to understand each other and not to disturb each other… The total disarmament proclaimed by Nikita Sergeyevich KHRUSHCHEV[129] at the session of the XIV General Assembly of the UN would become the first step in this direction.”[130] Support for the USSR remained very strong.

After 1965, the editorial board divided *BV* into several parts, and all peace-making materials were concentrated under the heading “The voice of Christians for the defence of peace.” At the same time the amount of such material was significantly reduced. Most of the articles from the peace-making part of *BV* were of an informative character. Often *BV* reproduced sermons written by famous Christians, like Martin Luther King,[131] or A. Schweitzer,[132] materials from peace-making conferences, or articles from foreign journals. The theory of peace-making was presented in the issues of this period by articles written by

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[126] Ibid., p.6.

[127] The author was not concerned about interpreting these words in their context. Christ’s words directed to his disciples as well as Paul’s exhortation for conducting a proper worship services could be converted by the author into a propagandistic slogan of foreign policy.

[128] N. Konopl’ev, 'O mire vo vsem mire' [About peace in the whole world], *BV*, vol. 3 (1961), p. 7.

[129] Capitalization by the author of the article.

[130] Ibid., p. 8.

[131] R. Starns, 'Voina vo Vietname raz’edaiet dushu nashego naroda' [War in Vietnam corrodes the soul of our people], *BV*, vol. 1(1968), p.8. This article was published before the death of M.L. King later that year. M.L. King, 'Velikoie iskusstvo – zhit’ brat’ami na zemle' [Great art of being brothers on the Earth], *BV*, vol. 5 (1968), p. 10.

[132] A. Schweitzer, 'Iz rechi velikogo zaschitnika mira doktora Alberta Shveitsera' [From the speech of the great defender of peace Albert Schweitzer], *BV*, vol. 3 (1971), p. 10.

K. Somov.[133] The main topic of Somov's writing was an apology for peace-making activity by believers. His arguments included not only biblical passages but also historical facts. Also the editorial board published a series of short anonymous articles under the title "Christian thoughts about peace". These articles appeared in *BV* from 1965 to 1970 and they were constructed from similar elements: reminders of the historical facts of the Cold War, condemnation of the Vietnam War, claims that Christians should be peacemakers, and emotional calls to peace-making.

Although the theme of peace-making continued to be present after 1965, the articles of this period are evidently different from the ones of previous years. They became more constructive, more sensible, and they did not contain the barefaced pro-Communist propaganda that characterized the Khrushchev period. In the 1970s and 1980s the peace-making part of *BV* presented only reports about certain events. This extended analysis has shown that articles on peace-making were full of rhetoric, with little substance, and they were of negligible value for evangelical believers. They had been a major theme because of Soviet pressure. The ECB ideology of peace-making eventually came to a dead end. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian evangelicals treated this issue with great reluctance and suspicion. It had not entered the evangelical bloodstream.

e. Christian unity

Unlike peace-making, Christian unity was a traditional concern for Russian evangelicals. Prokhanov was open to cooperation with any denomination.[134] Looking for ways to achieve influence in society and realizing the exceptional role of Orthodoxy for the Russian people, the Evangelical Christians shocked their Baptist brothers by showing great sympathy towards the Orthodox Church and a readiness to co-operate with the former persecutors of evangelicals.[135] Obtaining permission to preach in an Orthodox cathedral was considered by Prokhanov as one of his greatest personal achievements.[136] So the leaders of the AUCECB who had been influenced by Prokhanov, such as Zhidkov or Karev, had a vision for unity. But in 1944 unity was imposed on evangelical believers by the authorities. The AUCECB

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[133] K.V.S., 'Kristiane dolzhny byt' druz'iami vsekh narodov' [Christians should be friends of all nations], *BV*, vol. 1 (1966), p. 9; 'Blazhenny mirotvortsy' [Blessed are the peacemakers], *BV*, vol. 2 (1966), p. 8; 'I na zemle mir – na zemle Vietnama' [And peace on the Earth – the earth of Vietnam], *BV*, vol. 2 (1967), p. 5.

[134] I.S. Prokhanov, *V kotle Rossii* [In the cauldron of Russia] (Chicago, Ill.: World Fellowship of Slavic Evangelical Christians, 1992), pp. 184-185, 222-223.

[135] Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[136] Ibid. pp. 209-210.

had to make unity a priority, and to promote unity whether or not they really felt it was important. They had to forget about all the antipathies of the previous years and work with those whom they had avoided before, such as the Pentecostals. So the issue of Christian unity was ideological, even when it did not contradict their genuine convictions and doctrines.

From the beginning, the topic of Christian unity had a special category of its own in *BV*. Mostly the material was of an informative character, although there were not many articles that explained the theory of ecumenicity, apparently because the authors considered this issue as a mere application of Christian love and saw little need to persuade Christians to love certain groups of their brothers and sisters. Three different types of articles can be identified: first, features of an ecumenical character which related to the diplomatic activities of the AUCECB; second, items that concerned issues of interdenominational coexistence inside the Union; and third, publications directed at solving internal problems, especially with *Initsiativniki* and those who were under their influence. Samples of articles of each kind will be considered.

1. Ecumenical issues

Ecumenism in the broad sense was the most controversial and the most difficult theme for the authors of *BV*. Experiences of severe persecution of evangelicals by the Orthodox Church were still very vivid in the memory of ordinary believers. At the same time, both Orthodox Christians and Baptists had to collaborate in various ecumenical and peace-making projects under the pressure of the state. Only a few Baptist writers dared to explain the facts behind such collaboration. An article by K. Somov, "One flock and one pastor",[137] is an example of an ecumenical topic in *BV*. Somov wrote this article to defend the AUCECB when it joined the World Council of Churches (WCC). The author starts his explanation with reference to Jesus' mentioning "other sheep that are not of this sheep pen" (John. 10:16). Somov interprets the passage from John as proof of the existence of different groups of Jesus' followers who are to be united some time in a prophetic "future". The ground for such unification, from the point of view of the author, is "the fire of love for Christ."[138] Somov did not deny that most participants in the WCC did not have such fervent love and did not know the evangelical truth, at least not in its totality. Nevertheless, he approves this ecumenical contact in order to have the opportunity "to encourage other Christians to reserve the first place in their heart for Christ… to be close to the Christianity of the first centuries and to the

[137] K.V. Somov,, 'Odno stado i odin pastyr'' [One flock and one pastor (shepherd)], *BV*, vol. 5 (1964), p. 31.

[138] Ibid., p. 34.

pure evangelical doctrine."[139] In other words, ecumenical activity was justified as a sort of evangelism.

The theme of Christian unity was often mixed with the theme of peace-making. In these cases articles often took on a strong propagandistic flavour. Thus I. Ivanov built one of his sermons on the image of the Church as the body of Christ.[140] But in his opinion the illustration of the body spread far beyond a local community and it could be a description of the unity of the whole nation or even of all humankind.[141] As a result, international solidarity became a Christian virtue in this article. The author even cited as an example of the unity of Christians the compassion shown to victims of the Korean War.[142] His conclusion to the question "why do believers like the word 'peace' so much?" was that "this word peace talks about the happiness of all people and about the healthy condition of the body of humankind."[143] After 1964, ecumenical articles were frequently to be found in *BV* but usually they were either informational, about WCC involvement by AUCECB leaders, or concerned with very general issues of unity.

2. Inter-denominational issues

The dialogue between Baptists and Pentecostals has already been touched on in this work in connection with doctrinal aims in the publications of the AUCECB. Authors who dealt with the coexistence of Pentecostals and Baptists usually mentioned (normally briefly) the historical fact of the merging of different Christian groups in 1944-45 and then pointed to numerous biblical passages that supported the unity of the Church. Usually authors did not address the question of why no other denominational groups, except Baptists and Pentecostals, should demonstrate this model of Christian unity. Their only argument consisted in vague statements that Baptists, Evangelical Christians, and Pentecostals "had insignificant discords in secondary dogmatic issues."[144] A typical article of this kind is entitled "Unity of God's children", by A. Mitskevich.[145] Taking the illustration of the church as the body of Christ, Mitskevich uses a number of quotations from the Bible about the need

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[139] Ibid., p. 33.

[140] I.G. Ivanov, 'Edinstvo tserkvi' [Unity of the Church], *BV*, vol. 2-3 (1953), p.61.

[141] The biblical argument for this statement lies, in his opinion, in the words of Paul in Eph. 4:6 'one God and Father of all'.

[142] Ibid., p. 62.

[143] Ibid.

[144] F. Molokanov, 'O edinstve' [About unity], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1961), p. 81.

[145] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Edinstvo detei bozhiikh' [The unity of God's children], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 33.

for peace between followers of Christ and the danger of separation. All Christians should use any possibility of working and worshipping together.[146] Since Pentecostals are, in their doctrines, close enough to Evangelical Christians and Baptists,[147] they must be united in one organization. This was not the real feelings of Baptists, but ideology demanded that this be said.

3. Internal problems

BV articles reveal that internal AUCECB problems existed long before the dissent of the 1960s. An article in 1956 by S. Fadiukhin, "About unanimity",[148] refers to various arguments in local churches. The author considers such conflicts as occasional and non-systematic, "based on trifles of daily life."[149] At the same time, he reminds his readers about the sad example of the Israelite kingdom which split for "an unimportant reason" when King Rehoboam (2 Chron.10:1-11) could not reach agreement with the representatives of the people.[150] The warnings of the author seem to have been prophetic: he wrote four years before the open dissent in the AUCECB began.

This became a burning issue after the dissent had manifested itself in AUCECB life. An important article against the dissenters, written by Karev, appeared in 1964 under the title "Unity of the church."[151] The article was built round verses about church unity: Heb. 10:25; Eph. 4:3; Mt. 23:9; John 17:21; Phil. 1:27. Karev is primarily concerned to demonstrate the deep unity of all Christians in spite of their seeming diversity. Besides traditional biblical metaphors of unity - the body of Christ or the vine - new images were invented for this article. For example, according to Karev, Christian unity can be compared to the unity of all things consisting of the same set of atoms; or the unity of Christians can be compared to different parts of the earth which are shone upon by the same sun. Because the real unity of Christians is very profound, the disagreements between them, in contrast, are insignificant.

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[146] For the author, Christian unity means administrative unification. That is why he did not consider the possibility of collaboration with Pentecostals outside the AUCECB.

[147] The difference was smoothed off by the August agreement: A.I. Mitskevich, 'Edinstvo detei bozhiikh' [The unity of God's children], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 37.

[148] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'O edinodushii' [About unanimity], *BV*, vol. 5 (1956), p. 57.

[149] The author saw examples of such insignificant conflicts in arguments in the church of Corinth about meat devoted to idols (1Cor. 10:25-27), or in accusations of Pharisees to Jesus who did not follow the traditions of elders (Mark 7:1-23).

[150] The rhetorical strategy of the author consisted in intentional underestimation of the seriousness of the conflicts.

[151] A.V. Karev, 'Edinstvo tserkvi' [Unity of the Church], *BV*, vol. 1 (1964), p. 26.

To play down the seriousness of the dissent between *Initsiativniki* and the AUCECB became a major strategy in *BV*. Actually, the really serious point of disagreement was the attitudes of the two groups toward the state. But this issue was considered taboo for public discussion. The arguments presented by the representatives of the official wing of the Baptists fitted with their general ideological stance.

f. Conclusion

There is no doubt from the evidence considered here that the ideological aim was present in publications of the AUCECB. There can be no denying that the leadership of the Union cooperated with the Communist state and fulfilled its ideological tasks. At the same time, it would be a great mistake to see ideology as being at the heart of *BV*. Indeed, the ideological dimension within the periodical was limited. Except during the early years, ideological materials were strictly segregated. Usually ideological articles had their niche inside the periodical and they were marked as such very clearly. The articles did speak of the USSR in glowing terms, but church members were not naive: they knew how to interpret these statements. At the same time, it is necessary to bear in mind that Soviet believers were partly affected by state propaganda, so that some of their views resulted from a lack of other independent information. There were also ways in which the AUCECB genuinely saw the evangelical vision as consistent with Soviet values. The power of the ideological articles in *BV* was also limited because less use was made of the Bible in ideological writings. The exceptions to this were mainly to do with peace-making and Christian unity. The Bible was often used in quite superficial ways in these cases, suggesting that the effort was something of a façade. It is likely that in their powerful defence of the Soviet Union the authors realized something of the hypocrisy of their position, but they were prepared to look for values, such as peace, which they shared with the Communists. Despite the range of ideological articles in *BV*, ideology did not form the identity of the AUCECB. It disappeared when the pressure of the state began to weaken. The last ideological article was issued at the beginning of 1989.[152] The ideological aims in AUCECB publications were associated with the question of survival in the hostile environment. Ideology was a product of the position of the AUCECB in Soviet society.

[152] 'Zasedaniie komiteta po prodolzheniiu rabot Khristianskoi Mirnoi Konferentsii [Meeting of the Committee for continuing the activities of the Christian Peace Conference], *BV*, vol. 1 (1989), p. 52.

Part III. The spirituality of the ECB expressed in publications

Chapter 8

Conversion as central to ECB self-consciousness

a. Introduction

In the previous part of this thesis, the different aims in publications of the AUCECB were analysed. This part of the thesis will argue that in spite of the relative importance of those aims, they all played secondary roles. The main tendency within the ECB was to publish materials directed towards the formation of Christian spirituality in the readers of *BV* and other AUCECB publications, although at times even this goal had to be subservient to organizational demands made on the AUCECB leadership. There were genuine theological aspirations, there was a concern for education, and there were ideological influences at work in ECB publications in all periods of the AUCECB history but ultimately none of these were at the heart of the ECB vision. This chapter will seek to demonstrate the centrality of conversion to the ECB, within the broader picture in which spiritual identity was crucial and spirituality was the highest priority for the ECB communities. The parable of the prodigal son was a typical parable that used to serve as a basis for conversionist preaching.[1] The AUCECB was, in this as in other areas, a hermeneutical community.

b. Salvation and its role in the spiritual identity of the ECB

1. Spirituality as the highest concern of ECB authors

Formally *BV* editors did not separate "spiritual articles"[2] into a separate section in the periodical. The devotional writings could be found alongside theological, educational, or propagandistic materials. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to distinguish those concerned with spiritual life from those promoting a dogmatic or ideological position. There is in the spiritual articles a sense of inner commitment. It might be thought, in the light of this, that these articles would be applied very specifically to ECB life. However, almost all Soviet Baptists were agreed in the opinion that "spiritual" writings must be universal; that is, independent of particular historical circumstances. Such a view conforms to traditional Russian Orthodox

[1] For example, see I.P. Plett, *Zarozhdenie tserkvei EKhB. 1867-1910g.g. Zakavkaz'e, Ukraina, Peterburg* [Appearance of the ECB churches in 1867-1910, Zakavkazie, Ukraine, St.-Petersburg] (Izdatel'stvo «Khristianin», 1994).

[2] The title of the rubric under which such articles were to be found.

philosophy, grounded in the Neo-Platonic ideas of an ultimately static universe.[3] Also, the historical circumstances for the AUCECB were not conducive to participation in social life and this spirituality could not be embedded in an explicit way. The editors of *BV* preferred to raise themes that did not touch on contemporary problems but focused their interests on general issues of inner spiritual formation and devotional expositions of biblical texts.

The aim of fostering the inner life was thus of greater importance than the aim of understanding the outer shape of theology, or the aim of imparting such biblical knowledge as preachers thought fit, or the ideological aim imposed from outside. However, the importance of spiritual experience has often been missed. It is not that devotional articles were always highlighted in *BV*. But the Soviet recipients of the periodical, who were accustomed to ideological husks in every sphere of their lives, separated the husks – especially the ideological husks - from the substantial spiritual kernel of the contents of *BV*. If theological, educational and propagandistic materials in AUCECB publications are taken as representing the full spectrum of ECB life, this distorts the development of the evangelical movement in the USSR in the post-WWII period. For example, Walter Sawatsky exaggerates the pro-governmental character of the All-Union Council because he does not distinguish official articles written because of outside pressure from the articles that reflected the true concerns of the Union. As a result, he presents the underground wing of the ECB as in the vanguard of the evangelical movement in the USSR.[4] However, in the area which had the highest priority, spirituality, the AUCECB and the CCECB demonstrate a striking similarity in their publications. The quest for the true identity of Soviet Baptists demands a focus on the spiritual formation elements of the publications.

2. The essence of ECB spirituality

What was the spiritual glue that brought unity and coherence to the ECB movement during the Soviet period? In answering this question some general schemes of baptistic identity could be employed. For example, James Wm. McClendon, Jnr., writing in 1986, suggested five markers of baptists: biblicism, mission, liberty, discipleship and community.[5] Ian Randall, in an article in 2009, also spoke about five convictions: reading the Bible, living the

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[3] One of the fullest accounts of the Russian Orthodox view of the static world can be found in Pavel Florensky, *Ikonostas* [The Iconostasis] (Moscow: "Isskusstvo", 1995).

[4] See, e.g., M. Bourdeaux, *Religious ferment in Russia: Protestant opposition to Soviet religious policy* (London: MacMillan, 1968).

[5] James William McClendon, *Ethics* (*Systematic theology* vol. 1) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), p. 21.

life, nurturing the community, redeeming the powers, and telling the story.[6] But it is evident that even Randall's location of Baptist identity in a European context does not apply to the ECB because of the very special situation they found themselves in: under Soviet state control, largely isolated from the rest of the Baptist world, and without the normal means of communication within congregations. Thus, McClendon's mission and liberty markers, and Randall's suggestions about redeeming the powers and telling the story, cannot be found in any significant form in the AUCECB. Given that the ECB drew heavily from the Russian Evangelical Christian tradition, the description of evangelical characteristics provided by D.W. Bebbington,[7] conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism,[8] is a better fit for the depiction of ECB spirituality. But again, when evangelical activism in the sense of missionary efforts is meant,[9] it is crucial to do justice to the specificity of Christian mission in the thinking of ECB officials. ECB identity is best considered by looking at specific historical and contextual aspects.

Many Russian Baptist authors have looked for the identity of the ECB in the theological preferences of the movement. They took the view that they could ground the specific character of Russian evangelicals in certain doctrinal tenets. Thus, as noted in chapter 5, S. Savinski sought to find doctrinal coherence in the ECB movement.[10] But, as I argued in chapter 5, for the whole period of its existence there was no doctrinal unity in the AUCECB, just as there had been none in the evangelical groups before it. The diversity within the Union, which embraced different groups of believers, did not allow for any strict formulation of doctrinal principles. Apparently, Union leaders deliberately sacrificed the clarity of a doctrinal position in order to preserve unity. At the same time, their interest in doctrinal questions was not high since such questions were not crucial for them.

Neither was it administrative unity that defined the identity of the ECB. Russian Baptists lived in a strictly ordered hierarchical society. The idea of hierarchy was not only obvious in the secular life of the USSR but had deep religious roots which originated within the Russian Orthodox Church. The notion of *sobornost'* (collectivism), which implied

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[6] Ian M. Randall, 'Tracing Baptist Theological Footprints: A European Perspective', in *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, vol. 36, no. 2 (2009), pp. 133-148.

[7] D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[8] Ibid., pp. 2-17.

[9] Ibid., pp. 10-12. Bebbington is not just thinking of evangelism here but how revival and evangelism led into Christian concern to love neighbours both through philanthropy and seeking social change.

[10] See Savinsky, Part II, pp. 332-333.

absolute obedience to church authorities, was an essential part of a person's religious identity in Russian Orthodoxy. Therefore it might seem that the force that kept together so heterogeneous a unit as the AUCECB was the administrative power that relied upon the state authorities. Indeed some authors like Kurt Hutten described the Union of the ECB as an organization with excellent discipline where, as Hutton put it, "every Baptist was responsible for several of his fellow-believers".[11] During the dissent of the 1960s, a key question was administrative authority. But the existence after the split of two different Unions, the AUCECB and the CCECB, and especially the presence of many autonomous communities which emerged after the dissent, demonstrated that the ECB tradition did not depend for its identity on administrative structures. The local churches maintained their identity as ECB communities even outside of the central organization that had controlled them from 1944 onwards.

Nor was ECB identity found in a particular attitude to worship. AUCECB churches never had a comprehensive liturgical framework. There is certainly merit in W. Sawatsky's argument that the worship services were the centre of evangelical religious practice in the USSR.[12] In the Orthodox Church the unity of liturgy in all the local congregations was crucial, and such an attitude, no doubt, influenced evangelicals in the USSR. Indeed, it is notable that there were several elements that were present in all church services of the ECB: for example, for virtually all Russian Baptists preaching was central to worship.[13] All Soviet evangelical meetings shared some other very specific components such as reciting spiritual poems or four-part singing. As I showed earlier, because of pressure from the Pentecostals the standardization of worship services was of great concern to the AUCECB leadership.

At the same time, in spite of the fact that similarities of worship style in Russian congregations were an important part of spiritual life,[14] worship meetings themselves were not at the heart of the identity of the ECB. Believers could preserve their identity as members of the ECB without attending worship at all if, for example, the locality in which they lived did not have a church or the local church was "unsuitable." So, belonging to a local congregation of the ECB was considered a significant help in spiritual growth, but it did not define an individual's spiritual formation. Ultimately, spirituality was seen as the personal

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[11] K. Hutten, *Iron Curtain Christians: The church in Communist countries today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1967), p. 75.

[12] Sawatsky, p. 107.

[13] See chapter 3 of this thesis.

[14] It should be noted that ECB churches outside Russian-speaking parts of the USSR (for example, in Estonia) might have a different style in worship services.

achievement of every particular individual and spiritual development, in common opinion, did not rely upon a community of believers. In this respect Orthodox believers, for whom salvation did not exist outside participation in liturgy, differed drastically from the evangelicals.

By contrast, lifestyle did play a central role in forging identity within the ECB, but the framework within which the life of the believer was lived was not a written framework; it was informal. In the popular view, Russian Baptists are presented as those who followed strict rules regulating every aspect of their life, which might be true for certain congregations and even groups, such as the underground wing of the ECB which accepted regulations prescribing certain norms of behaviour for their followers.[15] However, the AUCECB itself produced no such documents. The only document for churches issued by the Council of the ECB was the Statute of the AUCECB. This was a legal document regulating the relationships between church practices and societal norms, and did not deal with the personal life of ordinary church members in local churches. In practice, it was possible to observe a variety of behavioural patterns among ECB believers. Concrete norms differed quite significantly from place to place and from time to time.[16] Nonetheless, a life of committed discipleship was crucial for all.

I wish to argue, however, that conversionism should be seen as essential to genuine ECB spirituality and that ECB identity cannot be understood without addressing the question of conversion. The evangelical movement in Russia was a popular movement, but conversions were not seen as taking place *en masse*. From the very beginning, evangelicals consisted of those individuals who considered that through conversion they had come "to live according to the Gospel of Christ", whatever this Gospel message, as they read it in the New Testament, might mean for their personal lives. They sought conversion not because it was a theological truth, but rather because it was biblical. W. Sawatsky is right when he observes that

> a survey of Soviet evangelical theology by means of the standard theological categories would … misrepresent the essential nature and function of Soviet evangelical theology. They were and are part of the so-called 'free church or

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[15] Usually such documents were copied manually and kept in secret. The archive of the RU ECB possesses some samples of the internal charters of local communities of the CCECB. One of them is 'Brother's advice to young Christians', mentioned in L.N. Mitrokhin, *Baptizm* [Baptists] (Moscow: IPL, 1966), p. 222. This document describes very detailed rules of behaviour in all possible situations including very intimate moments of life.

[16] This is partly discussed in Sawatsky's book (pp. 255-269). Also see G.S. Lialina, *Baptizm: illiuzii i real'nost'* [Baptists: illusions and reality] (Moscow: IPL, 1977), pp. 18-19.

> believers' church movement which still places greater value on biblical studies than on systematic theology.[17]

At the same time, the notion of "biblical studies" is too broad. No doubt, the Evangelical Christians-Baptists claimed that the only source of their spiritual life was the Bible, but in fact they drew from the Bible central ideas which affected everything else. A central focus was the idea of conversion.[18] All other constructs, whether doctrinal or administrative, were understood in the light of this experience. Therefore the answer to the question of coherence in the identity of the Soviet Baptists needs to be found by examining the idea of spiritual conversion, consisting of repentance from sin and being reborn to a new existence under the leadership and protection of God.

The narrative of individual salvation through conversion forms the centre of gravity in practically all AUCECB publications. It is difficult to find an article that does not have as its foundation a story of salvation through personal conversion to Christ. Even ideological materials written under pressure preserved this trait. For example, the most frequent ECB argument in favour of believers seeking world peace – a common theme, as noted in the previous chapter - was the fact of their salvation by Christ and hence their belonging to God's Kingdom.[19] Even when restrictions on baptisms were accepted by AUCECB leaders, the emphasis on conversion remained firmly in place. Thus in 1948, when Zhidkov recommended that churches restrict the number of baptisms per year,[20] his argument did not mention the real situation, which was that rapid church growth might result in problems with the state. Instead, he appealed to the notion that personal salvation was a very serious event and baptism could not occur until the profession of conversion had been tested. Mass baptisms, therefore, could lead to spiritual immaturity among the newly converted church members.[21]

The claim that the story of personal salvation through Christ is the central theme of all spiritual writings produced by the AUCECB does not mean that every article recounted the whole narrative of salvation. Quite the opposite: the number of such articles is limited. But

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[17] Sawatsky, p. 338.

[18] Heather J. Coleman, in *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), entitles her chapter 3, 'A Communion of Converts: Conversion Narratives and Social Experience', and uses not only published accounts but also conversion narratives written by those applying to Bible College.

[19] E.g. 'Golos tserkvi za mir dolzhen byt' gromche vsekh drugikh golosov' [The voice of the church for peace should be louder than all other voices], *BV*, vol. 4 (1958), p. 3.

[20] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Vzgliad nazad' [Look back], *BV*, vol. 1 (1948), p. 5.

[21] Ibid., p. 6.

almost every article implied that personal salvation was the central point that calibrated all other events in human life and, thus, every article represented a certain part of this salvation story. The story of salvation divided all human beings into those "already saved" and those "not yet saved". It labelled every action as either "godly" or "fleshly". It was the understanding of conversion that created the vocabulary of *BV*, its system of ethical values, and its hermeneutical tenets.

The absence of complete conversion narratives in *BV* at this time may be partly due to the problem that the initial part of the story necessarily referred to the sinfulness of humans before conversion. Indeed, it is practically impossible to find an article directly describing the sinful life of any particular person before conversion. Further, the *BV* never presented a personal testimony that could be considered as a model for the process of conversion. If *BV* authors spoke about sin they painted one of two stories; either they meant the sins of believers within the churches or the sins of biblical personages. In the situation of atheistic censorship it was not easy to claim in *BV* that all unbelievers, including the great majority of the Soviet people, the members of the Communist Party, and even the leaders of the Soviet state, were sinners who must be converted in order to be saved.

The most frequent theme of devotional articles was to speak about the life of believers after conversion. In fact, such articles were the norm. The actual moment of conversion was acceptable as a topic in *BV* articles, but this was not so common. Nor did articles talk about the contrast between the lives of the converted and the unconverted. A striking difference between spiritual articles in *BV* and articles in periodicals from previous periods of Russian Baptist history consists precisely in a complete lack of criticism of the situation that they faced in contemporary society. Since the idea of sinfulness could not be applied to their current social reality, authors might have tried to demonstrate this idea in relation to foreign capitalist countries or societies which existed in previous historical periods, but AUCECB preachers preferred to avoid this kind of criticism.[22] The reasons for this will be considered later. As a result, biblical narratives were the only place where the story of personal salvation might appear in its full form in *BV*. For example, the paradigm of salvation could be found, as A.I. Mitskevitch did in 1961, in the story of St. Paul,[23] or as Vitalii Kulikov did in 1976, in

[22] Such attempts can be observed during the initial period of the history of ECB but later they completely disappeared.

[23] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Mysli iz knigi Deianii Apostolov' [Thoughts from Acts], *BV*, vol. 4 (1961), p. 36.

the conversion of Cornelius.[24] The parable of the prodigal son was the most popular biblical model for the conversion paradigm.

c. The content of ECB conversionism

In 1971 A. Karev wrote an article under the title "Prodigal son"[25]. Using the story from Luke 15:11-32, Karev depicted, in standard evangelical terms, how sinners ought to come to God for personal salvation. This was the conversion narrative according to the view of Evangelical Christians-Baptists. I will consider this scheme in more detail. The first point to notice is that almost all attention was directed to the younger son of the parable. Karev mentions the elder son only at the end of the article and attributes to him the showing of an improper attitude toward new converts.[26] Being a model sinner, the younger son goes through four very clearly marked stages:

1. Fall (The prodigal son leaves his father[27]);
2. Sinful life (The prodigal son in the far-off land[28]);
3. Repentance (The prodigal son's breast-beating[29]);
4. Renewal of relationships (The prodigal son at his father's bosom[30]).

It is noteworthy that Karev divides the sinful stage of the prodigal son's life into two parts. He distinguishes between his leaving the father's house and his living apart from the father. Normally, for evangelicals, the Fall is not an event in the life of any particular individual. It is taken as read that people are sinful from birth because of the fall of their forefather, Adam.[31] But for Karev the fall was a tangible event. To understand this it is crucial to recognise that Karev addresses only the community of faith. This sermon is for believers only. It did not affect those who were not already in the evangelical church circle. The prodigal son is a person who was brought up in the community of faith but broke away from it. There is no doubt that both the elder and the younger brother of the parable represent

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[24] See V.G. Kulikov, 'On skazhet tebe slova, kotorymi spaseshsia!' [He shall tell thee what thou ought to do to be saved!], *BV*, vol. 4 (1976), p. 30.

[25] A.V. Karev, 'Bludnyi syn' [The prodigal son], *BV*, vol. 5 (1972), p. 15.

[26] For Karev, the elder son corresponds to 'Christians who grumble at everything in the church' (Ibid., p. 27).

[27] Ibid., p. 15.

[28] Ibid., p. 17.

[29] Ibid., p. 19.

[30] Ibid., p. 21.

[31] *EKhB*, p. 23.

sinners. But, in the eyes of Karev, although the elder brother should not have grumbled, at least he had remained in the congregation and therefore was accessible for corrections.[32]

In other words, this interpretation perceives in the image of the prodigal son the situation of children of evangelical believers who did not want to follow their parents; so the fall is the moment when they openly broke with their families. Karev is very clear about his position. He writes: "How many children of God have no other option than to cry and to pray for their children who left them! We have so many fathers and mothers whose sons and daughters have followed the way of the prodigal son!"[33] For Baptists in the Soviet period, the members of their own families constituted the only missionary field possible. So the focus was on the sin of breaking spiritual relationships inside the families. In this sense, the "sinners" of the ECB followed the plot of the parable literally. At a certain moment they left their fathers and mothers and lived without the protection of their congregation, which often led them to a crisis in life which might be called a collapse.[34] Karev also speaks of "Laodicean believers", those who while being formally church members still do not live the norms of the Christian life.[35] Their repentance consists in the decision to return to traditional evangelical spiritual practice. Such conversion results in "joy and delight, singing and exultation, experiencing the bliss and felicity of Christ's closeness."[36]

The orientation of evangelistic preaching towards believers or, more precisely, towards people who were already under a certain influence from Baptist churches, was the most conspicuous characteristic of the conversionist narrative by Evangelical Christians-Baptists. But this does not mean that Soviet Baptists did not accept the conversion of people from outside their narrow circle. The language of the article is so ambiguous in the portion concerning applications of the biblical story that it might also be applied to people without any Baptist background. Nevertheless, the Children of Christian Parents[37] (CCP) were the first target of the missionary efforts of evangelists of that period.

Since the moment of repentance was considered as a turning point in the life of any Christian, the story of salvation could be be divided into three parts: a. Life before

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[32] Karev, 'Bludnyi syn' [The prodigal son], p.15.

[33] Ibid., p. 17.

[34] This plot was very popular in poems recited during worship services. Dozens of such poems could be found in multiple hand-written collections of poetry kept in the personal libraries of believers.

[35] Ibid., p. 23.

[36] Ibid., p. 25.

[37] *Deti veruyeshikh roditeley* (DVR) was a common term of those days that roughly corresponds to the American slang idiom 'MK' (missionary kids) or 'PK' (preacher's kids), although it takes in a wider group.

conversion. This was a dark, ungodly period of life, associated with addiction to various sins and transgressions. As noted, little attention was paid to how this kind of life was to be found outside the churches. The focus was on those who had wandered from the faith; b. The moment of conversion was usually a climactic event that transfigured the whole of human life; c. Life after conversion could be characterized as a yearning for excellence in spiritual life, with that life being lived on the threshold of final redemption after death. These stages of the salvation narrative will be considered in more detail.

d. The life of sin

The theme of human sinfulness continued to be problematic for the AUCECB. Living in a hostile environment, Evangelical Christians-Baptists were not enthusiastic about interfering with the life of the atheistic society. Believers preferred to keep clear of mainstream society: thus the chief editor of *BV,* Vitalii Kulikov, claimed that the "consolation of God's people is the paramount goal of any evangelist".[38] Evangelism was directed not to unbelievers but to those inside the church. It needs to be noted that V. Kulikov maintained such views even in 1988, after the authorities had already granted religious freedom to believers in the USSR. As result, the spiritual condition of unbelievers was never seriously taken into consideration by Baptist authors in the USSR. It is not that the AUCECB denied the total depravity of humanity. The leaders of the Union simply did not address the theme of the sinfulness of human society as a whole. The doctrine of sin was never discussed by *BV* authors in any expanded form.[39]

An example of the approach of ECB authors to teaching about sin can be found in an article by A. Mitskevich in 1956, "The fall of man".[40] The article describes the essence of sin from the position of a person who is already at peace with God. According to Mitskevich, Adam's rebellion against God constitutes a paradigm of the fall of all believers – those who lose their faith. The main task of the author clearly consists in warning the "clean innocent hearts of those who do not experience the horror and abomination of sinful deeds and actions."[41] Only at the very end of the article does the author raise the important theological question about the origin and nature of sin in the universe: "whether evil resides in human nature or whether it is alien to humans". His answer is certainly not in accordance with

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[38] V.G. Kulikov, 'Uteshaite moi narod' [Console my people], *BV*, vol. 2 (1988), p. 13.

[39] The book *Dogmatika* contains a chapter devoted to the problem of sin. But, as mentioned before, this book was a translation of *Great Doctrines of the Bible* by W. Evans.

[40] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Grekhopadeniie cheloveka' [The fall of man], *BV*, vol. 6 (1956), p. 31.

[41] Ibid., p.35.

Calvinistic evangelical thinking. It is an optimistic Christian perspective, perhaps somewhat along Orthodox lines: "We cannot assume that people have evil inside themselves, otherwise moral perfection would be impossible."[42] Evil in the world is due to the abuse of the gift of free will granted to human beings: "our own experience proves that people were created without evil and with free will."[43] In other words, sin was not considered in the AUCECB as inevitable. At the same time, blameless human nature was never a reality because of the prevalence of evil in the world.

This paradigm can be placed alongside ideas within Communist society described in the book produced in 1938 by Nikolas Berdyaev, "The origin of Russian Communism".[44] Berdyaev demonstrates that Russian Communist ideology was initially based on a humanist ideal from the pre-revolutionary period, but by the time of Stalin's rule it had turned into a denial of any intrinsic value of personhood because of the possibility of people taking the side of the enemies of communism. He writes:

> The fanaticism, intolerance, cruelty and violence of a typical Communist are defined by the fact that he/she feels himself/herself standing in front of Satan's kingdom against which he/she cannot stand. At the same time he/she depends on Satan's kingdom, on evil, on capitalism and the bourgeoisie. He/she cannot live without the enemy, without a negative feeling toward this enemy. He/she loses his/her pathos when there is no enemy… The revolutionary pathos significantly relies on a negative attitude toward the past.[45]

The Communist denial of individual human value in the context of a world where capitalism still reigns reached its climax in the period of Stalin.[46]

In the subsequent periods of Soviet history the principle of the deterioration that could take place within human society, seen in human inclination toward capitalism or private ownership - both of which were destructive of social coherence – was an important ideological postulate. This might have been identified with human depravity, but the relationship was too complicated, and this was a determinative factor causing representatives of the AUCECB to omit the theme of the sins of unbelievers in their writings. This topic

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[42] Ibid., p.37.

[43] Ibid.

[44] N.A. Berdyaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* [The Origin of Russian Communism] (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1955), pp. 148-151. (Initially this book was published in German. Here I use the Russian original text published later).

[45] Ibid., pp. 149-150 (translation A.P.).

[46] It was formulated, for example, in the book by A. Vishinski, *Teoriia sudebnykh dokazatel'stv v sovetskom prave* [The theory of Judicial Proofs in Soviet Justice] (Moscow: Iuridicheskoe izdatel'stvo ministerstva iustitsii, 1941), pp. 141-176.

simply was beyond the sphere of their competence. Baptists did not want to interfere with the area of state ideology. The AUCECB was responsible for the propagation of the concept of the sinfulness of believers, while the problem of unbelievers was a matter of state propaganda. If members of the AUCECB spoke about the sinfulness of unbelievers, they acted only` in areas which the government delegated to them. For example, S. Fadiukhin, in the article "Advice for preachers",[47] proposed the following points in a model sermon about the problem of sin:

> - Sin produces death (Rom.5:12), though death does not disclose itself immediately.
> -Sin was revealed in the act of Cain killing Abel.
> -Sin reveals itself in those who carry out the deaths of millions of innocent people for the sake of personal profit.[48]

No doubt, Fadiukhin has in mind here (especially in point 3) "Western militarists". But he speaks about the sin of unbelievers very guardedly. Even when he criticizes the "war hawks" he does not dare to name them and he touches the issue of sin only indirectly. In no way does he want to enter the domain of state ideologues who alone had the supreme right to condemn social evils.

While unbelievers were not the kind of sinners to whom ECB preachers directed their message, members of local churches were encouraged to feel strong revulsion for their own past, present, and also future sins. But the authors who wrote about sin were aware of the constant pressure of internal and external censorship and it was typical that an article that touched on the problem of sin was general rather than specific. The phrases used were: "sin is a revolt against God", "sin is a mortal spiritual illness", "sin is a bad habit".[49] It was not easy to understand the relationship between biblical teaching and real life. Typically, however, sins were divided into two categories: "rough sins of the flesh" and "spiritual sins that darken the image of Christ in us."[50] This can be seen in Karev's article on the prodigal son,[51] considered earlier. There were the repulsive "rough" or "serious" sins of those outside the

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[47] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Sovety propovednikam' [Advice for preachers], *BV*, vol. 5 (1965), p. 3.

[48] Ibid., pp. 37-40.

[49] The outline of the model sermon from the article by Fadiukhin perfectly demonstrates this rule. The quotations here are taken from the article by R.B. (?) 'About sin' (R.B., 'O grekhe' [About sin], *BV*, vol. 3 (1974), p. 60) which seems to have implemented Fadiukhin's outline.

[50] From the speech of A. Karev at the Congress of 1964 concerning the importance of the Statutes of ECB: 'Bogosluzhebnoie sobraniie, posviaschionnoie otkrytiiu vsesoiuznogo s''ezda evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [Worship service devoted to the opening of the All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 6 (1966), p. 8.

[51] Karev, 'Bludnyi syn' [The prodigal son], p. 15.

community of faith. At the same time, Christians were warned to be vigilant concerning their own "slight" sins which were still present in their spiritual lives. This requires further analysis.

One of the hardest questions concerning the authors who wrote about "rough" sins is the question about their rhetorical goals. It is quite obvious that the authors did not write for unbelievers and did not even have in mind urging their readers to start preaching to unbelievers. The concept of evangelism was taboo for official Soviet Baptists. Indeed, the word "evangelism" was used in *BV* for the first time only in 1990.[52] Before Perestroika, any hint of a public appeal which could be construed as proselytism could provoke a criminal investigation. So when "rough sins" or "sins of the flesh" were mentioned the normal intention was to remind believers of their former ungodly life and warn them against falling into sin again. However, articles written for *BV* also reveal that such reluctance to write about unbelievers' sins existed only in publications. Evangelistic sermons did exist. Thus, an article by N.N. entitled "Ministry of a Christian pastor"[53] mentions preaching to unbelievers as one of several pastoral responsibilities. But this ministry had its proper place and time, namely, preaching during a worship service at church. He writes: "God's word preached from the pulpit is trusted to the church for guidance and grounding in faith. Also it is a means for the conversion of sinners to Christ and for their further edification".[54] In other words, the church was using the following paradigm of missionary ministry: authoritative persons (presbyters/pastors) could and should preach to those unbelievers who willingly came into their church building. But proclaiming good news was not the business of ordinary believers and could not take place outside the meeting places of Christians. That is why the theme of the sins of unbelievers was an inappropriate subject for discussion in AUCECB publications.[55]

What did "rough" sins include? For a definition of sin, authors sometimes used biblical catalogues of sins such as in Gal.5:19-21.[56] Theoretical speculations about sin were

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[52] This word appeared in Russian in a Baptist context for the first time in a speech of Denton Lotz at the 44th Congress of ECB: 'Sorok chetviortyi vsesoiuznyi s''ezd evangelskikh khristian-baptistov' [The forty fourth All-Union Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 2 (1990), p. 62. In parts of the USSR outside Russia, for example in Estonia, there was greater freedom.

[53] N.N., 'Sluzheniie khristianskogo pastyria' [Ministry of a Christian pastor], *BV*, vol. 5 (1966), p. 36.

[54] Ibid., p.38.

[55] From time to time authors in *BV* wrote about evangelistic sermons that took place during special worship services or other gatherings but the journal never included the content of such sermons.

[56] E.g. N.K., 'Trud i molitva' [Work and prayer], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1956), p. 71; Mikhailov, N., 'Da budut vse ediny' [Let them be one], *BV*, vol. 5 (1968), p. 15.

multiple in *BV* and often they had a scholastic character, mentioning sins that never occurred in practice in the churches, such as witchcraft.[57] At the same time, they had their own list of "rough" sins which, if committed, did not allow the person to maintain membership in a local Baptist church. Thus, in an instruction to presbyters,[58] the president of the Union, A. Klimenko, instructs: "Excommunication may be applied to church members only in case of rough sins like drunkenness, fornication, adultery."[59] Interestingly, Klimenko stresses that other sins which are not as obvious, for example, insulting a pastor,[60] should not have excommunication as their consequence. In other words, drunkenness was sin number one for Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the Soviet period. Many other texts confirm this.[61] Drunkenness in the vocabulary of ECB meant not only addiction to alcohol but also any consumption of spirits.

The second most important sin was the sin of sexual misconduct. This implied not only adultery but also any deviation from standard Christian sexual morality. Since discussion of "fornication" was deemed obscene, authors never wrote of it in detail. The meagre materials relating to the theme of sexual conduct and misconduct show that even a very intense sexual relationship inside marriage might be seen as perversion.[62] Marriage with unbelievers also belonged to this category of sins.[63] Several articles in *BV* present the evil pair, of "drunkenness and fornication", as the most grievous of the "rough sins".[64] Other serious sins included smoking tobacco,[65] playing cards,[66] swearing,[67] and stealing.[68] But

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[57] E.g.V.P. (V.A. Popov), 'Razmyshleniia nad knigoi zhizni' [Meditations upon the Book of Life], *BV*, vol. 5 (1978), p. 26.

[58] A. Klimenko, 'Sluzheniie i otvetstvennosti presvitera i tserkovnogo soveta' [The ministry and responsibilities of a presbyter and of a church committee], *BV*, vol. 1 (1982), p. 24.

[59] Ibid., p. 31.

[60] Insulting a pastor was a frequent reason for excommunication. At the same time, people who were excommunicated for this reason might consider themselves as heroes who dared to fight against evil in their leaders. The difference between abusive conduct and unmasking of evil-doers in the prophetic spirit was very unclear in the minds of many of the believers of that time.

[61] It is interesting that exactly the same picture could be observed in national sub-unions of the AUCECB: see T. Pilli, 'Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Estonia: The Shaping of Identity, 1945-1991' (PhD thesis, University of Wales, International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague, 2007), p. 235.

[62] N. Voronezhskii, 'Grekh protiv tela' [A sin against the body], *BV*, vol. 1 (1949), p. 68.

[63] E.g. 'Iz zhizni pomestnykh tserkvei' [About the life of the local churches], *BV*, vol. 6 (1988), p. 72. Disapproval of marriages with unbelievers was not expressed in *BV* before *Perestroika*, since such marriages were encouraged by the atheistic authorities.

[64] The same pair can be found in the article by Karev on the prodigal son, discussed previously.

[65] N.Ts.Shch. (N. Tsunenko), 'Vred kureniia' [The harm of smoking], *BV*, vol. 5 (1946), p. 44.

committing these sins did not have such severe consequences as the "two mortal sins" of drunkenness and adultery. For example, in the Moscow ECB congregation members were, surprisingly, not excommunicated for stealing or fraud even if they were the subject of criminal trial proceedings.[69]

The hierarchy of sins was obviously grounded in the idea of fighting against what might be termed the "binge culture", that is, against a specific lifestyle dictated by alcoholism, for alcoholism was one of the major social problems of Russian society long before the Communist Revolution. The production of anti-alcohol propaganda was a tradition for Russian sectarians in general and for evangelicals in particular.[70] In the Soviet Union routine, excessive drinking of alcohol was widespread in all secular social groups and had reached the scale of a national catastrophe by the time of Perestroika.[71] So the strategy of the Baptist Church to present itself as a haven of sobriety was quite reasonable. It is also significant that encouraging teetotalism did not give rise to any objection from the side of the state. *BV* was free to call believers to live a life free from sin, if that call was not at odds with Soviet ideology.

e. Spiritual change as the crucial life-event

Almost all spiritual articles in *BV* in the Soviet period had a common trait: they were written with the presupposition that both the author and addressees shared the same experience of spiritual change that determined their life priorities and value systems. The memory of the experience of conversion created the background for spiritual life and formed the foundation of the arguments for the moral and spiritual standards to be followed throughout a life of discipleship. At the same time, *BV* authors usually did not focus too closely on the event of

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[66] A. Adler, 'Iubileinyie torzhestva v Estonii' [Jubilee celebrations in Estonia], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1954), pp. 95-96.

[67] Ibid.

[68] I. Motorin, 'Desiat' zapovedei' [Ten commandments], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 89. Motorin decided that the sin of stealing was so untypical for the ECB that he tried to make it more applicable. He explained that the eighth commandment implied also vagrancy and lust for money.

[69] E.g. the case of M. Novikov, which I heard from M. Zhidkov (at that time senior pastor of the Moscow Baptist Church) in 1989. M. Novikov was arrested in 1955 for illegal business activity in the production of fur caps. Nevertheless he was not excommunicated and even remained in his position as a deacon of the church.

[70] 'Teetotalers' (*Trezvenniki*) was the name of several Christian sects, the biggest being *Churikovtsi*. They have their website at http://trezvograd.3dn.ru .

[71] M. Geller, A. Nekrich, *Istoriia Rossii 1917-1995* [History of Russia 1917-1995] (Moscow: MIK, 1996), pp. 296-297.

rebirth itself. The reason why AUCECB leaders preferred to avoid direct consideration of this theme was connected with their reluctance to address the problem of sin. The experience of conversion, the move from a sinful life to a new spiritual existence, could be seen as challenging the world of unbelievers, and here *BV* authors did not feel free to comment. So the rebirth experience was often seen either as one in which someone who had wandered from a Christian home was repentant, or a narrative about those who already had faith but whose life needed changing so that it was holy. For example, the article on the prodigal son by A. Karev[72] spoke of the sinner to whom God's call was directed, the prodigal son, as a "believer who had lost closeness to Christ."[73]

Conversion in the interpretation of the ECB did not merely concern changes in a person's viewpoint, or philosophy: rather it consisted in unconditional obedience to Christ, which involved acceptance of the traditional moral and ethical convictions of Russian evangelical Christianity. The AUCECB Confession of 1985 claimed: "Repentance and conversion include distress for sins, confession of sin before the Lord, leaving sin behind, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal saviour... True signs of conversion are complete change of life, hatred toward sin, love of the Lord and the Church, thirst for fellowship with Christ, aspiration for the likeness of Christ within the converted person's life and the fulfilment of God's will."[74] In spite of some diversity in the descriptions of conversion, all authors agreed that it was a complex act that included several stages. Thus, M. Orlov, in an article in 1948 "Dogmatic talks",[75] proposed four steps in conversion:

1. Faith, which opens the door for the "truth of God's revelation".[76]

2. Repentance, "expressed in a confession of sins".[77]

3. Conversion, which consists in a "full change of thinking and ways of life".[78]

4. "Birth from above", which is a "radical change in the inner contents of life".[79]

Another description of the paradigm of salvation can be found in the article in 1969, "Local church", by A. Karev.[80] The author claims that "the process of the birth from above is

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[72] Karev, 'Bludnyi syn' [The prodigal son], p. 15.

[73] Ibid., p. 20.

[74] *EKhB*, p. 25.

[75] 'Dogmaticheskiie besedy' [Dogmatic talks], *BV*, vol. 3 (1948), p. 35.

[76] Ibid, p. 40.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid. The difference between conversion and 'birth from above' is not very clear in the article.

[80] A.V. Karev, 'Pomestnaia tserkov' [Local church], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 19.

described in God's word very clearly. The stages are as follows: repentance, faith, justification, receiving of the Holy Spirit."[81]

One of the most substantial articles on conversion in *BV*, which combined both doctrinal and practical aspects, was an article in 1957 by A. Mitskevich, entitled simply "Conversion".[82] This article summed up most of the elements that were typical for articles which dealt with this issue. First of all, Mitskevich stresses the importance of the theme: "the doctrine of conversion occupies the central place in our creed."[83] Complying with tradition, he bases his sermon on the text from John 3, the meeting between Jesus and Nicodemus. This text was a very popular starting point for talking about conversion. For example, this text was a central part of the course on exegesis in the Correspondence Bible Courses.[84] The frequent use of John 3 was typical of wider evangelicalism, but Mitskevich does not follow the plot of the story. Rather, he turns to the story of the prodigal son.[85] As I have argued, the story of the prodigal son was the primary paradigm of salvation for the Soviet Baptists. For Mitskevich, as for any other author of that period, sin must lead to repentance. In defining conversion, Mitskevich claims that "before anything else a sinner has to repent". Repentance, in Mitskevich's definition, is "an inner recognition of his/her guilt before God and a decision to break with that former sinful life in order to start a new life in Christ."[86] The feeling of guilt before God was an absolute requirement for the start of a spiritual renewal. The same idea was repeated in many articles in *BV*.[87]

In looking at John 3, Mitskevich offers a typical evangelical interpretation of Christ's words about the "birth from water and the Spirit" (John 3:5). In a long passage he tries to prove that "water" in this context is a metaphorical designation of God's word, that is in the Bible.[88] In other words, in Mitskevich's paradigm, a sinner has to come to an understanding of his or her sins while Bible reading under the influence of the Holy Spirit. A remarkable aspect of Mitskevich's interpretation of John 3:5 is that he does not even consider engaging with the traditional Orthodox theological thinking that baptism was the point of conversion or

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[81] Ibid., p. 22.

[82] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Obrascheniie' [Conversion], *BV*, vol. 5 (1957), p. 43.

[83] Ibid., p. 43.

[84] A.Karev, A.Mitskevich, V.Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis] (Moscow: VSEKhB), pp. 54-58.

[85] Mitskevich, 'Obrascheniie' [Conversion], pp. 43-44.

[86] Ibid., p. 43.

[87] e.g. S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Proschaiutsa tebe grekhi tvoi' [Your sins are forgiven], *BV*, vol. 6 (1979), p. 23.

[88] Mitskevich, ‚Obrascheniie' [Conversion], p. 49.

rebirth. Indeed, he never discusses baptism in the context of spiritual conversion.[89] At the same time, the author devotes several points of his article to how confession of sins and faith are expressed. Here we can see that Mitskevich has in mind repentance not only as a pure spiritual act but as a public rite that includes "kneeling before his [Christ's] holy feet", and confessing from the heart "the guilt of sins".[90] No doubt, the author's thinking here is influenced by the practice of public repentance.

In *BV* and in the AUCECB generally the expression "to come out to the pulpit" was a synonym for the expression of conversion.[91] It referred to the popular custom of people making public witness to repentance and faith by coming to stand before the pulpit at the front of church buildings. These public responses as a rule were very emotional, almost hysterical, and sometimes they took a considerable amount of time during worship services.[92] To some extent such public conversions replaced the rite of baptism. Indeed, there were no restrictions placed on this public expression of conversion, while baptisms, which automatically led to the growth in the number of members of a local community, produced problems for local leaders. As a result, there could be years between a public profession of conversion and baptism, especially for young individuals. In this situation "coming out to the pulpit" had a special meaning. Thus, the rite of baptism became a seal of spiritual maturity rather than a sign of conversion.

While turning from personal sins in repentance was the negative aspect of conversion, its positive side consisted in accepting Christ. The acceptance of Christ had quite a specific meaning and implied recognition of being freed from the burden of sins through faith. A new believer had to reach an assurance that his or her sins were forgiven. Mitskevich writes: "Trust in full justification reached through Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for personal salvation."[93] During the moment of conversion feelings of guilt should ideally be converted to feelings of spiritual purity and perfection. Theologically, a sinner suddenly becomes a holy

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[89] The only time the word 'baptism' is used in the article is in relation to baptism by the apostles. (Ibid., p. 52).

[90] Ibid., p. 44.

[91] e.g. I.S. Gnida, N.A. Kolesnikov, N.Z. Kvirikashvili, V.K.H. Ryndina, 'Poiezdka na Kubu' [The visit to Cuba], *BV*, vol. 4 (1977), p. 40; 'Vesti iz obschin' [News from congregations], *BV*, vol. 5 (1970), p. 80. Before *Perestroika BV* authors tried to avoid mentioning public repentance as it took place in ECB churches. The expression 'to come out to the pulpit' can be mainly found in the description of foreign trips by AUCECB leaders.

[92] One part of Mitskevich's article consisted in a call for restraint during repentance: A.I. Mitskevich, 'Obrascheniie' [Conversion], p. 44.

[93] Ibid., p. 46.

person, although a journey to spiritual maturity lies ahead. It is a revolutionary event in the life of any person, which signifies an inner transformation of the individual's old sinful nature into a new nature. Because of its miraculous character, this event does not take much time,[94] in contrast to the long process of moral training in the "fleshly world."[95] The dominant belief, linked with much standard Protestant theology regarding justification by faith, was that this event was pivotal: through conversion a person was "right with God" and was given a new moral character.

Mitskevich lists a number of metaphors that describe the moment of conversion: the resurrection of a person who was dead;[96] the creation of a new spirit inside the human body;[97] returning to Eden;[98] and receiving the power of the Holy Spirit.[99] All these images have a common feature: they depict conversion as a supernatural event. As a result, the holiness of the subsequent life of a newly converted person relies not on human inclinations or endeavours but on the supernatural presence of God. This somewhat mystical view of conversion was traditional for Evangelical Christians-Baptists and was in contrast to their great scepticism toward supernaturalism or mysticism in other spheres of Christian life, and to those such as Pentecostals who stressed supernatural gifts. The supernatural character of the event of rebirth had a number of important consequences.

One consequence was that it is difficult to find any theological or psychological description of the process of conversion. The supernatural character of God's revelation made impossible any objective depiction of the phenomenon of rebirth. Osvald Tärk, the Estonian theologian, affirms: "We believe in the conversion of a person not because of any testimony of psychology. We believe in eternal life not because of any testimony of philosophy."[100] As a result, the only language that can be applied to the process of conversion is the language of metaphor. The term "to repent" was illustrated through a great number of expressions like "to lay all sins down at the feet of Christ", "to cling to the bosom of Christ", "to respond to the call of Christ", none of which could explain the essence of the process to those who had not yet personally experienced conversion. But it was considered as a norm since in common

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[94] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[95] Ibid., pp. 45-47.

[96] Ibid., p. 47.

[97] Ibid., p. 48.

[98] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[99] Ibid., p. 50.

[100] O. Tärk, 'Poslaniie k Rimlianam' [Romans], *BV*, vol. 1 (1993), p. 16.

evangelical conviction "unconverted persons cannot understand spiritual truths."[101] Indeed, clear understanding of what was happening during the process of rebirth was not crucial for the members of ECB since for most of them it was an experience of the past. The fact of the converted life had much greater importance.

The mysterious experience of conversion built a bridge between the biblical text and the reality of the believers' daily life. In conversion, biblical narrative was actualized for the reality of the current world. All accounts of life, events of biblical personages, and the life of Christ himself became real for *BV* readers precisely because "Christ entered their life" during conversion. So the persons who had experienced conversion felt themselves to be participants in the biblical story of salvation. That is why the value of any spiritual article consisted in its "Christocentricity", that is, the piece of writing promoted the idea that there were hints of the conversion of sinners through the sacrifice of Christ everywhere in the Scriptures.[102] Whenever the Bible was read and interpreted, there was a demand that there be reminders of the miraculous moment of conversion. These reminders made the text real to those who read or heard the interpretation. Conversion clearly differentiated people in the eyes of ECB followers. For them there were only two sorts of human beings: those who had experienced salvation and those who were still sinners. For members of the ECB, the supernatural character of the rebirth experience created a foundation for a sense of superiority because the moral qualities of evangelical Christians "were not naturally gained by training" but came through conversion.[103]

At the same time, the supernatural nature of morality for those who "accepted Christ" made it quite controversial. On the one hand, it raised the moral demands on Evangelical Christians-Baptists to a very high level. Indeed, any moral imperfection in a converted individual would prove that his or her holiness did not have a heavenly source. "A believer has no right to allow him or herself to commit a sin."[104] On the other hand, believers could not be responsible for their actions since the source of their righteousness did not belong to

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[101] M.R. Gaan, 'Dolzhno vam rodit'sia svyshe' [You need to be born from above], *BV*, vol. 5 (1988), p. 7.

[102] The principle of 'Christocentricity' was stated at almost all Congresses of the AUCECB. For example, A. Bichkov claimed at the Congress of 1985: 'Our periodical remains faithful to the commandments of its founders in being Christocentric and Christological, that is, proclaiming the truth of reconciliation between God and man.'(A.M. Bichkov , 'Otchetnyi doklad Vsesoiuznogo soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov 43-mu Vsesoiuznomu s"ezdu EKhB' [Report of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians–Baptists to the 43rd All-Union Congress of ECB], *BV*, vol. 3 (1985), p. 27).

[103] From the obituary of P. Malin, *BV*, vol. 1 (1948), pp. 19-20.

[104] From. O.Tärk, 'Poslaniie k Rimlianam' [Romans], p. 3.

their fleshly nature. So they lived in a paradoxical situation of extraordinarily high moral expectations and a deepening sense of guilt before God because of the practical impossibility of reaching these expectations.

The authors of *BV* were aware of this dilemma. Thus, A. Karev notes: "A favourite question of God's children is 'can a converted person commit a sin?' We must admit that there is no single answer to this question."[105] The issue was complex. The compromise proposed by Karev was typical. He made a case for the existence of two types of sins: sins unto death and sins not unto death (1 Jn. 5:16-17). So some sins (not unto death) were defined as of lesser seriousness while others led to unconditional excommunication.[106] But Karev did not provide clear criteria to differentiate between these sins. So it was the congregation that had to take responsibility for moral judgments in defining behavioural norms and standards for their members.

The last observation leads to the very essence of what went on during and after conversion experiences in ECB churches. Behind the rhetoric there were objective measures of what "a true conversion" did. Conversion consisted of incorporation into the community of ECB including acceptance of its spiritual perspectives, the distinct vocabulary in which beliefs were expressed, and a system of moral and social rules and values. This incorporation took place not in baptism, which designated formal membership in a local community, but rather happened in the supernatural act of "repentance" which, normally, was a communal event like the return of the prodigal son. It symbolized acceptance or, more often, re-acceptance (in the case of the children of believers) into informal participation within the local baptistic community of the saints, which was what was really meant by the expression "to accept Christ" and "to follow Christ". In this process, biblical interpretation had a critical meaning since it created the communal language of ECB and, thus, formed the hermeneutical community.

Conversion, then, was of the greatest importance for readers of *BV* as an act of initiation. But there had to be a focus on the daily life of the believer. Indeed, all the publications of the AUCECB concentrated on the question of the living of the holy life by those who had once accepted Christ. That initial acceptance of Christ also meant acceptance of and into His church. An example is the sermon in *BV* by the nineteenth-century Scottish evangelical, Henry Drummond, "Ill-temper", from the book of his addresses, *Ideal life*.[107]

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[105] A.V. Karev, 'Padeniie Davida' [Fall of David], *BV*, vol. 5 (1969), p. 31.

[106] Ibid.

[107] H.Drummond, *Ideal Life and other unpublished addresses* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897).

The sermon is based on the parable of the prodigal son.[108] Drummond claims that the parable proposes a typology of human sins. The younger son represents "sins of the body" (sin as result of impulsive desire) and the older son represents the "sin of disposition" (sin that springs from defects of personality). The goal of the exposition is to caution the reader against both kinds of sins. The emphasis is put on the internal perfection of believers. The point of the author is that one should surpass both sons in righteousness and reach a certain point of moral excellence. Although the author was from a very different period and context, this article fitted the goals of the AUCECB. Conversion did not imply outreach, but was directed inside. The important thing was the fruit of conversion: Christian spirituality.

f. Conclusion

The true concern of the ECB in their publications consisted in nurturing spirituality. Within the wider commitment to spirituality, I have argued that ECB consciousness was formed by the idea of conversionism. The ECB's conversionism was central to its life. It was modelled after the archetype of the biblical prodigal son narrative. It includes such elements as a sinful life, conversion (or rebirth) itself, and a subsequent life of holiness. The striking feature of the ECB scheme of conversion consists in the complete exclusion of all elements associated with the call to proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers. Their circumstances significantly influenced the paradigm of conversion within the ECB. The preaching of conversion was directed not to unbelievers but to people who had had an evangelical background but had left their community. In descriptions of the sinful life, emphasis was placed on conduct that was inconsistent with traditional Baptist standards: a lack of sobriety and of sexual morality. Conversion was considered mainly as a return to the way of life of the parents. It included such elements as denial of the previous sinful lifestyle and acceptance of Christ by publicly coming out to the pulpit. Conversion implied individual change and also incorporation into communal life and acceptance of its standards and beliefs.

The need to avoid dealing with unbelievers in the paradigm of conversion was to a large extent due to the fact that any mention in *BV* of those outside the ECB community as sinners in need of salvation would have come under state censure. This limitation on what could be said created a specific hierarchy of elements in the paradigm. Thus, in ECB published materials less attention was paid to sinful life and the moment of conversion – although that moment was seen as possible because of a supernatural work of God - and the stress was, rather, on living a supernaturally-enabled life of holiness after conversion. The

[108] G.D. (Henry Drummond), 'Starshii brat' [Older brother], *BV*, vol. 5(1946), p.14.

main focus in *BV* and other publications was on the issues of holy living for those who had experienced conversion and belonged to the congregation. This fact makes the concept of holiness pivotal in the study of the spirituality in ECB. At the same time, it is not the case that the concentration on the pursuit of holiness which was seen in this period was new in Russian sectarianism. It has a very long tradition, and was recapitulated and actualized anew in the AUCECB. I will consider this issue in the following chapter.

Chapter 9

The holy community: the place of holiness in ECB identity

a. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the place of conversion in the life of evangelical Christians, as portrayed in AUCECB publications. But the move from the life of sin to a new life, through new birth, was a stage. Certainly it was a crucial stage for a believer, but the people for whom AUCECB publications were designed were not those approaching conversion, or experiencing conversion, but those living a "life of holiness". The theme of holiness runs through all issues of *BV* and is reflected in the great majority of the "spiritual" articles. Even some ideological material reflected this main aspiration of *BV* authors - to help believers reach the highest standards of holiness and righteousness and to be part of holy communities. Multiple references in *BV* editorials confirm that pointing to the goal of seeking spiritual excellence was a conscious choice of the editorial board of *BV* and this concern is confirmed in other publications of the AUCECB. In this chapter I will examine traditions of holiness in Evangelical Christians-Baptists communities, will argue for holiness as a major theme in the AUCECB, and will seek to probe the different facets of holiness. The first part, on Russian religious traditions, does not deal directly with evangelical publications, but shows the context in which evangelical thinking about holiness took shape.

b. Traditions of holiness in ECB communities

1. Holiness in Russian religious traditions

In Russia, Western ideas were assimilated not in their original form but as a blend of Western formulae and Slavic - sometimes very ancient - concepts and interpretations. This complex process can be observed in different areas of life after Peter the Great, for example in the formation and development of Russian national music and literature up to the appearance of

Russian Communism.[1] Similarly, Russian Baptists owed a great deal to English and German evangelical influences, but in Russia wider evangelical concepts were reformulated. This was true in regard to the concept of holiness, which was one of the most important notions in Russia long before the emergence of the evangelical movements.

Holiness was so important that Russia itself was called by its inhabitants "holy Russia" (*svyataya Rus*).[2] V.Toporov, in his exhaustive work, *Holiness and saints in the Russian spiritual culture*,[3] demonstrates that among the Slavs the idea of holiness, *svyatost,* has deep roots. Most scholars agree that it originated from pre-Slavic traditions before Christianity. Pagan names, like *Svyatoslav* (lit. "holy glory"), *Svyatogor* ("holy mountain"), *Svyatomir* ("holy peace") and similar terms, show that the widespread nature of the concept of *svyatost.* Thus the Byzantine Christian tradition of holiness was merged with the native concept previously known to Slavic tribes. Toporov argues that the origin of the word *svyatost* is from the Indo-European root *svent*, which has the meaning of "growth, swelling, increase in volume or other physical characteristics."[4] In other words, holiness or sacredness was understood as a force that enlivens the world, a power that secures its formation and development. This ancient view of holiness was preserved in future generations and determined certain peculiarities of the Russian concept of holiness.

Holiness was perceived concretely as a visible part of the material world. In popular thinking holiness was never considered as outside of the experience of the senses. It never appeared in an abstract form but rather as an attribute of the most important, or prominent, or even bizarre things in the world. Holiness was seen in the earth itself.[5] The holiness of the

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[1] One of the best short sketches of the revival of Russian nationalism in the 1800s can be found in G. Florovsky, *Vechnoe i prekhodiashchee v uchenii russkikh slavianofilov* [Universal and transient in the teaching of Russian Slavophils] (in *Slavianski glas*, Sofiia, 1921, v. 1, nos. 1-4, pp. 59-77).

[2] There were many definitions of the term *Sviataia Rus'*. Dmitry Likhachov (*Kul'tura kak tselostnaia sreda* [Culture as an integral system], in *Novii Mir*, no. 8, 1994, pp. 5-8) noted that this notion implies for Russians the totality of their values. This makes its understandings very diverse.

[3] V.N. Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture] (Moscow: Shk. «Iazyki rus. kul'tury»,1995—1998). Other prominent works on this theme are G.P. Fedotov, *Sviatye Drevnei Rusi* [Saints of Ancient Rus'] (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1990) (and other writings of this author); E. Golubinskii, *Istoriia kanonizatsii sviatykh v russkoi tserkvi* [History of the canonization of saints in the Russian Church] (Moscow: Krutitskoe Patriarshee Podvor'e Obshchestvo liubitelei tserkovnoi istorii, 1998); V.M. Zhivov, *Sviatost'* [Holiness] (Moscow: Gnozis, 1994).

[4] V.N. Toporov *O rituale. Vvedenie v problematik* [About ritual. Introduction to the topic] (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), pp. 441–489.

[5] Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture], pp. 480-481.

earth was its ability to transfer its power to trees and herbs.[6] Natural objects such as a river, a mountain, a well, or a spring might also be called holy.[7] A holy man had to prove his holiness through a demonstration of extraordinary traits. For example, one monk and warrior, Ilya Muromets, who is celebrated in many Russian folk epic poems, was venerated for his great physical strength.[8] Byzantine ideals of severe asceticism merged with understandings of the unusual capacities of holy hunters. Thus holding records in abstinence and self-humiliation were part of the achievements of Russian saints, not only in the Middle Ages but also in the twentieth century.[9]

Toporov stresses that the Russian concept of holiness did not focus, as in Catholic countries, on human sanctity.[10] Indeed personal ethical behaviour did not play a central role in the living of a holy life. In some ways the opposite was the case. Nature or the universe was the centre of gravity for a Russian understanding of holiness, and the norms and ethical conventions of society were often considered hostile to natural simplicity. Among Russian saints there was a special category called *blazhenniye* (lit."blessed ones") or *yurodivye* (God's fools).[11] These people were characterized by extravagant and even obscene behaviour, and the breaking of widely-accepted social norms. Often God's fools showed their asceticism by not wearing clothes, and ignoring hygiene. They might use arrogant language and demonstrate disdain for the secular and formal ecclesiastical worlds. These "righteous savages" of Russian Orthodoxy were highly esteemed and respected. One of the most conspicuous examples of respect to *yurodivye* can be seen in the St. Basil Cathedral on Red Square, which was erected upon the order of Ivan the Terrible in honour of Basil, a famous God's fool in Moscow.[12] In the early twentieth century, the actions of God's fool Grigory Rasputin were among the factors that provoked the Russian Revolutions of 1917.[13]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 481.

[8] See O. Bazanova, *Homeland of Ilya Muromets*, in *Science in Russia*, v. 6, 2009, pp. 66-72.

[9] P. Pascal, *The Religion of the Russian people* (Crestwood, St.Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), pp. 37-42 .

[10] Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture], p. 434.

[11] Pascal, *The Religion of the Russian people*, pp. 49-50.

[12] N.F. Kalinin, *Postnik Barma - stroitel' sobora Vasiliia Blazhennogo v Moskve i Kazanskogo kremlia* [Ascetic Barama, the builder of the St. Basil's Cathedral and Kazan Kermlin], in *Sovetskaia arkheologiia*, no. 3, 1957, pp. 261-263.

[13] E.Radzinskii, *Rasputin* (Moscow: AST Moscow, 2007)

There was a tendency in ancient Russian mentality to make almost everything sacred.[14] This included very ordinary people as well as the "saints". For example, the word "peasant" in Russian (*krestyanin*) is derived from the word "cross" (*krest*).[15] The main feature of peasants was not their style of life or occupation but their sanctification, which involved wearing a pendant in the form of a cross under their clothes. This pan-sacral world view had a very important consequence in the formation of messianic self-perceptions. Russians felt themselves to be "God bearing people" (*narod bogonosets*)[16] who saw Moscow as "the Third Rome" (after Rome and Constantinople), that is as a holy city which served as a focus for Christendom.[17] They did not doubt their mission to bring God's truth to the rest of the world. The thesis about Slavic exclusiveness was especially developed in the nineteenth century by *Slavophiles* such as A. Chomyakov, I. Kireevskiy, K. Aksakov, I. Aksakov and F. Dostoyevsky.[18] Another dimension of holiness is the idea of *sobornost'*, which implies a consolidation and unification of people. Any deviation from uniformity could be considered as a transgression of the norms of holiness, thus defiling the whole community. N. Berdyaev argues that Russian Communism, with its idea of a community engaging in the World Revolution is a "transformation … of the old Russian messianic idea" [19] of the ancient Slavs.[20]

According to Toporov, one feature of the Russian concept of holiness is its extremely emotional nature.[21] Russians never tried to rationalize the concept of holiness and they never formulated it in theological or ethical terms. Rather they tried to express it in their art, architecture, and music. Holiness did not have to be understood but had to be felt. Standing in pious awe before a holy icon was the highest point of the experience of holiness. Those

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[14] Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture], p. 478.

[15] Ibid.

[16] A term of F. Dostoyevsky from his novel *Besy* (Devils) (*Sobranie sochinenii v 7 tomakh, t. 4: Besy* [Works in 7 volumes, V.4: Devils] (Moscow: Leksika, 1996), p. 231).

[17] Wil van den Bercken, *Holy Russia and Christian Europe: East and West in the religious ideology of Russia* (London: SCM, 1999), pp. 210-214.

[18] Although Dostoyevsky did not belong formally to the *Slavyanofyly* group his ideas influenced the development of Russian nationalism a great deal.

[19] N.A. Berdyaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* [The Origin of Russian Communism] (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1955), p. 15.

[20] See also the last works of V.Rozanov *Apokalipsis nashego vremeni* [Apocalypse of our times] (Moscow: Direktmedia Pablishing, 2008).

[21] Toporov, Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture], p.478.

things or persons that evoked great emotions were highly esteemed. This is seen in earliest Russian saints, Boris and Gleb.[22] They were assassinated in their adolescence during a dynastic fight for power between different feudal clans. Their death was not martyrdom in the classic sense of this word. But the image of innocent teenagers being killed provoked such strong emotion that Boris and Gleb soon became two of the most popular Russian saints.[23] The same feeling was involved in the story about the young ECB member, Ivan Moiseyev.[24] He was conscripted into the army, was possibly tortured for his faith, and perished during his military service.[25] This stress on emotion, coupled with the interest in the material and the lack of interest in ethical norms, opened Russian traditional holiness to criticism. These issues have been made the topic of many literary works, for example, in the dramas of A. Ostrovsky,[26] or in novels of N. Leskov.[27] Notions of holiness were deeply rooted in Russian culture.

The focus on holiness is not intended to suggest that Russian spirituality exhibited all the features examined above. Rationalism attracted the attention of many spiritual and social leaders throughout Russian history.[28] Nevertheless, it is hard to overestimate the importance of holiness. Vladimir Fedorov wrote: "The idea of "Holy Rus'" cannot be affixed to any historical stage. Holy Rus' represents the values that for many Russians (even if not for the majority) used to be the highest values."[29] Russian Baptists might be considered as opponents of these traditional spiritual values, since their preaching of salvation contradicted the perception of holiness as being connected with the senses and with emotion, and they

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[22] Ibid., pp. 490-507.

[23] Fedotov, *Sviatye Drevnei Rusi* [Saints of Ancient Rus'], p. 44.

[24] M. Bourdeaux, K.. Murray, *Young Christians in Russia* (Lakeland, 1976), pp. 88-121.

[25] His violent death was not proved. Even some ECB authors doubt that Moiseyev was killed for his religious convictions (T. Nikol'skaia, 'Kto takie otdelennye' [Who *otdelennye* are], in *Mirt*, 5 (30), 2001).

[26] See A.N. Ostrovskii's famous *Groza* [Thunderstorm] (Moscow: Ravnovesie, 2007) in which the heroine commits suicide because she cannot endure the pious traditions in the family of her husband.

[27] This is one of the central themes of his writings. For example, N.S. Leskov, in his famous novel *Ledi Makbet Mtsenskogo Uiezda* [Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk Province] (in *Sobraniie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, Moscow: Ogonek, 1973, v.1, p. 234), seeks to demonstrate the shallowness and weakness of traditional morality under the mask of piety.

[28] See I.D. Afanasenko, 'Realizm i ratsionalizm v razvitii Russkoi tsivilizatsii' [Realism and rationalism in the development of Russian civilization], in *Vestnik Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. I. Kanta*, no. 5, 2007, Kaliningrad: Izd-vo RGU im. I. Kanta, 2003, pp. 9-15.

[29] V. Fedorov, 'Russian Orthodoxy, the national idea, messianism and fundamentalism', in *Religion and Nationalism in Russia* (St. Petersburg: Interchurch Partnership "Apostolic City - Nevskij Prospect" Press, 2000), pp. 68-94.

emphasized ethical life and the strict following of moral norms. Moreover, they did not commend asceticism or miraculous manifestations, nor did they care about fitting into the traditional social hierarchy which was implied by the idea of *sobornost'* (though this was impossible for any non-Orthodox religious group anyway). In other words, it seems evident that evangelicals were profoundly at odds with the traditional Orthodox system of spiritual values. At the same time, Russian Baptists preserved older Russian Christian traditions in, for example, their visible austerity, their commitment to the community of believers, their emotional spirituality, and their tendency to natural simplicity.

2. Holiness teaching in Ivan Kargel

Russian evangelicals were also affected by fresh ideas of holiness that became popular in evangelical circles in several countries in the nineteenth and early twenties centuries.[30] The most influential promoter of the new ideas of holiness, stressing the deeper spiritual life, within Russia was Ivan Kargel (1849-1937). Writing in *BV* in 1946, Alexander Karev, then General Secretary of the AUCECB, acknowledged Kargel as being a major influence in his spiritual formation.[31] Almost a quarter of the issues of *BV* published from 1945 and 1988 have an article by Kargel or some reference to him. Kargel's evangelical spiritual formation was in the German Baptist context. Even at the end of his life he prepared his sermons in German and then his daughters translated them into Russian.[32] Kargel was baptized and joined the Baptist church in Tiflis (Tiblisi), in the Caucasus in 1869.[33] Later he became pastor

[30] For holiness streams in England in the nineteenth century see D.W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000). For Baptist spirituality in England in the early twentieth century see I. Randall, 'The myth of the missing spirituality: Spirituality between English Baptists in the early twentieth century', in Phillip E. Thompson and Anthony R. Cross, eds., *Recycling the past or researching history?: Studies in Baptist historiography and myths* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), pp. 106-128.

[31] A.V. Karev, 'Iz moikh lichnykh vstrech s I.V.Kargelem'' [From my personal encounters with I.V.Kargel], *BV*, vol. 3 (1946), pp. 19-20.

[32] M. Karetnikova, 'I.V.Kargel', in *Almanac on the History of the Russian Baptists* (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, v. 4, 2009), pp. 5-81, p. 68.

[33] V.L. Val'kevich, 'Zapiska o Propagande Protestantskikh' Sekt' v' Rossii I, v' Osobennosti Na Kavkaze' [Notes on the Protestant sects in Russia] (Tiflis: Kanceljarijj Glavnonachal'stvujushhago Grazhdanskoju Chast'ju na Kavkaze, 1900), appendix 5, p. 29. See also D. Miller, 'Iogann Kargel', in *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma*, V.4 (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2009), pp. 83-87, p. 83; D.Y. Turchanov, 'Vosponinaniia o zhizni i sluzhenii Ivana Veniaminovicha Kargelia' [Memoirs of the life and ministry of Ivan Veniaminovich Kargel], in *Al'manakh po istorii russkogo baptizma*, V.4 (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dlia vsekh, 2009), pp. 61-81, p. 62).

of the German Baptist church in Sorotschin, attended Johann Oncken's Mission School in Hamburg,[34] and in 1875 became pastor of the German Baptist Church in St Petersburg. Four language-specific Baptist congregations developed in the capital – German, Estonian, Lettish (Latvian) and Swedish.[35] However, the major influence on Kargel became the evangelical movement led by Vasiliy Pashkov.[36] Eventually Kargel became the most influential spiritual leaders in Ivan Prokhanov's Union of Evangelical Christians. He exercised ministry until his death in Ukraine in 1937.[37]

In speaking about holiness in the lives of believers, which was his most prominent theme, Kargel appealed not only to scripture but also to his own experience and spiritual journey. After testifying to his own conversion,[38] which took place in 1869,[39] He reports that his "first love", that is, an initial period of religious enthusiasm (which he paints in idyllic colours) was later lost. He confesses that he noticed "the bliss" of his early spiritual experience only when he lost it, and it is quite possible that he idealizes that "first love". He also comments that his initial enthusiasm was met with great scepticism by "dear elderly believers".[40] But Kargel could not accept any compromise in the spiritual life. So after the "first love" period was over, he felt great disappointment and tried to restore the spiritual high of his past. I am not claiming that his quest for holiness was motivated by Russian influences, but it was consonant with the Russian national pursuit for spiritual purity in their Orthodox Christian faith.

It seems that the period of "spiritual weakness" in Kargel's life, following the loss of the "first love", lasted for seven or eight years.[41] His critical assessment of this period came later. At the end of that period he came to a point of crisis. G.L. Nichols shows that this took place during Kargel's ministry in Bulgaria, where he lived from 1880 to 1884.[42] Kargel mentions "two small tracts" that became catalysts of inward discomfort and led to an intensive search for deeper sanctification. Possibly, one of these tracts was the sermon by

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[34] This offered short courses for preachers. See Miller, 'Iogann Kargel', p. 83.

[35] Robert Sloan Latimer, *With Christ in Russia* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 40.

[36] See chapter 2 of this thesis.

[37] Karetnikova, 'I.V.Kargel', pp. 80-81.

[38] I.V. Kargel, *Sobraniie sochinenii* [Selected works] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 2000), p. 685.

[39] Turchanov, *Vosponinaniia o zhizni i sluzhenii Ivana Veniaminovicha Kargelia* [Memoirs about the life and ministry of Ivan Veniaminovich Kargel], pp. 61-81.

[40] Ibid., p. 80.

[41] Ibid., p. 81.

[42] See G.L. Nichols, 'Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality' (Ph.D., International Baptist Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2010), pp. 99-127.

C.H. Spurgeon *Blagodat'yu vy spaseny* [By grace are ye saved],[43] which Kargel mentions in the book *Khristos – osviascheniie nashe*.[44] What was important is that these tracts raised the problem of his spiritual weakness and need, but they did not solve it.

It seems that personal meditations and reading evangelical books and booklets were not the only sources for Kargel's spiritual search. There are strong reasons to believe that the spiritual formation of Kargel was affected by the Slavic spiritual discourse into which he immersed himself. For Kargel, sanctification was a matter of deep personal experience. He gave an account of his views on holiness in his many sermons and especially in the mentioned above book, "Christ our Sanctification", published in 1926. This book was extremely popular among Evangelical Christians and Baptists. The AUCECB reproduced the text of the book in a series of publications in each *BV* 1983 issue. The CCECB published the book illegally as a paperback. Kargel argues that the key to spiritual power lies in the recognition of the presence of Christ in the human soul. This presence is known at conversion, and the experience of sanctification for believers, according to Kargel, consists in a further revelation of the presence of Christ. More than half of the book is occupied by a description of disciplines of a holy life. But these disciplines are presented as auxiliary elements for perceiving what believers have already received.

Kargel presents a mystical theory of sanctification,[45] which in many aspects influenced the formation of the model of sanctification held among AUCECB leaders. Recently G.L. Nichols has argued for the influence of Keswick holiness teaching on Kargel's

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[43] The Russian translation of the book C.H. Spurgeon, *All of Grace* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1886). When Kargel refers to Spurgeon's book he gives the title of its Russian translation and quotes the Russian text. Obviously he used a Russian copy of this book. This means that Kargel read this book in Russian. It was published by V. Pashkov between 1874 and 1884 (see Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Vosemdesiat let ievangel'sko-batistskikh zhurnalov' [80 years of evangelical and Baptist journals], *BV*, vol. 5 (1947), p. 16). I failed to find a preserved copy of that edition.

[44] I.V. Kargel, *Sobraniie sochinenii* [Selected works] (Petersburg: Bibliia dla vsekh, 2000), pp. 49-114. G.L. Nichols proposes that the other book was *On sam* [Himself] written by A.B. Simpson ('Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality', pp. 204-207). Nichols relies on the article by A. Karev ('Iz moikh lichnykh vstrech s I.V.Kargelem' [Personal meetings with I.V. Kargel], *BV*, vol.4 (1946), p. 19), who was recommended by Kargel to read this tract. At the same time, this happened much later - after the writing of *Khristos – osviascheniie nashe* - so it is impossible to be sure that it was exactly the same book that influenced the spiritual renewal of Kargel.

[45] I am using 'mystical' in the sense of religious intuitionism. It implies direct awareness of the divine in devotional experience. It does not mean, here, contemplative quietism and passivity.

experience and thinking.[46] It is not my purpose in this thesis to discuss the origin of Kargel's ideas.[47] However, it seems likely that ideals of holiness in the Russian spiritual tradition were incorporated into his thinking. Indeed, M. Karetnikova notes that Kargel translated into evangelical language the Orthodox idea of sanctification as *obozheniye* (lit. "deification"), and suggests that this was one element in the secret of his popularity.[48] The difficulty in probing this further is that whereas Kargel quotes from a number of evangelical authors in his writings he does not quote from Orthodox sources. What is crucially important is that Kargel's views were enthusiastically accepted and developed by Russian evangelicals. They were regarded as biblical. Nichols outlines key ideas that Kargel planted among his later followers: "that sanctification is the result of personal consecration, that the filling of the Holy Spirit is crucial to the process, that salvation and sanctification cannot be accomplished by human strength." Kargel also stressed "abiding in Christ" and considered that the holy life would "lead to suffering".[49]

Kargel's views which were spread through *BV* were set out, as noted, in "Christ our Sanctification". He writes, in language that was typical for holiness teachers of the time: "Everything in relation to our growth in sanctification and in our transformation into the image of Christ will depend on the relationship which we have with our Lord - does He live in us, do we abide in Him, this is unconditional."[50] The question Kargel addresses is: "Does a converted Christian need sanctification?" This question touched the core tension in the Baptist understanding of spirituality. As noted in the previous chapter, the moment of conversion was pivotal for believers. But the doctrine of free salvation through faith did not solve the question about the necessity of further spiritual development for believers. Most

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[46] The detailed analysis of the similarities and differences can be found in Nichols, 'Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality', pp.199-232.

[47] In spite of all the similarities, it is hard to expect that the worldview of Kargel, who never visited England, was shaped by English evangelicalism directly. There is no evidence for the claim of Karetinkova that Kargel 'participated in the foundation of the Keswick Movement' (Karetnikova, 'I.V. Kargel', p. 4). The Keswick Convention influence was obviously indirect, via books and personal contacts in Russia, especially through Freidrich Baedeker, with whom Kargel travelled in the period 1885-1895. Some aspects of the teaching of Kargel (e.g. in regard of the role of suffering in Christian life) differed from what was proposed by the Keswick movement.

[48] M. Karetinkova, *Velikiy dukhovnyi uchitel* [Great Spiritual Teacher] (in Mirt (electronic edition), #17, August-September, 1999).

[49] G. .Nichols, 'Ivan Kargel and the fulfillment of revival', in *Baptistic Theologies*, Prague, International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009, pp. 23-39, p.39.

[50] I.V. Kargel, 'Khristos Osv'aschenie Nashe' [Christ our sanctification], in *Sobranie Sochinenijj* (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dl'a vsekh, 2000), p. 113.

Russian national preachers in the later nineteenth century, such as Ivan Ryaboshapka or Mikhail Ratushniy, limited their messages to proclaiming salvation by faith and never paid attention to the needs of believers who wanted further steps in their spiritual growth. Such a situation was not satisfactory. Kargel was therefore a powerful voice. He was categorical in his affirmation of the necessity of spiritual advance after the initial experience of salvation. He writes: "Justification is just the beginning of atonement, but perfect sanctification is the end of the glorious atonement. Sanctification is atonement that stretches out through the entire life-time period. It must continue in us till everything that we possess has the seal 'Holy to God' and we ourselves carry the seals of this atonement."[51]

Personal heroic achievements of holiness, which were highly valued in the Orthodox context, were commended to evangelical believers. Kargel writes: "Sanctification … is a business that cannot be advanced a step without our efforts. We have to participate in it with all our heart even though all our participation would consist in full surrender to God and full acceptance of God in our hearts. The most important thing is to realize that God should be both the Alfa and Omega of our sanctification. This is most important in fulfilling God's will in our daily life."[52] But this will was to be found, not in tradition, nor primarily in experiences, but in the Bible. For Kargel the Bible was "daily spiritual food" for the Christian.[53] Nor was this simply an individualistic matter. In a way that paralleled Orthodox ideas of the church, he spoke of the "the society of saints". This was not "simply a gathering of people in a closed congregation".[54] It is true that Kargel also stated: "Holiness means separation."[55] Indeed this became central to AUCECB spirituality. Holiness created a boundary that separated members of evangelical communities from the rest of the world, part of communities which consisted of individuals locked inside the sacral borders of the Heavenly Kingdom. But it was the Spirit, not separation, that created the community. Kargel clearly demonstrates this idea:

> The true holy society is a unity of the hearts of God's children which is created through the anointing of the Holy Spirit and by the Holy Spirit. So each one in the group feels that it is not just a similarity of character, or gifts, or honour, or education, or similar opinions, or views, or social positions, or belonging to the same spiritual party, or any other advantages of a material or spiritual nature which unites people. Christ alone, who is the great head of his body, unites the saints indeed.[56]

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[51] I.V. Kargel, *Sobraniie sochinenii* [Selected works], p.51.

[52] Ibid., p. 60.

[53] I.V. Kargel, 'Khristos Osv'aschenie Nashe', p. 92.

[54] Kargel, *Sobraniie sochinenii* [Selected works], p. 103.

[55] Ibid., p. 57.

[56] Ibid., p. 103.

The expression “true holy society” has Russian rather than Keswick overtones.

The authors of *BV* never analyzed sanctification as deeply as Kargel did, but the exhortation to seek holiness by surrender of the self was very close to the hearts of AUCECB church members, so they made it a centre of their spirituality. Also they lived in a hostile environment, and here, too, Kargel was a spiritual guide. ‘Suffering and grief’, he stated in “Christ our Sanctification”, “were in the path of our Lord – that is what we just saw; and our path will be the same, for there will be no other; there must not be any other, because we again hear from the lips of the Lord the instruction; hate your own life, take the cross and follow Him.”[57] Kargel’s intense doctrine of sanctification granted to believers an alternative to the hostile outer world. This inner universe was the space where believers had full freedom, where state control had no power. They were attempting to survive the hard times and they did not want to leave their safe haven. At the same time, the idea of holiness had an indisputable importance for the very existence of AUCECB as a social group.

c. Holiness: the major theme in *BV*

In the very first issue of *BV* the editorial board announced:

> We want *Bratsky Vestnik* to be useful for all who sincerely believe in God and who love him and his commandments with all their hearts. We want this publication to help all of us to carry out the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, the teachings of love, justice, and pure, holy, diligent love in practice.[58]

In the expression “help all of us” it seems that authors and readers of the periodical are joined together in the common desire to live “pure, holy” lives. Holiness was the primary value. The theme of a holy life was embodied in every issue of the periodical.

First of all, the great interest in the theme of holiness surfaces in the choice of materials for the journal. As observed in previous chapters, editors had to be aware of their censors. Often they were forced to propagate official positions. But it is significant what the preferences of the editorial board were when they had greater freedom. This may be demonstrated with a chart of the topics of spiritual articles published in 1969 when, probably for the first time, the number of devotional pieces exceeded the number of theological and ideological items.

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[57] Kargel, ‘Khristos Osv’aschenie Nashe’, p. 107.

[58] From the article by Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Nash zhurnal' [Our journal], *BV*, vol. 1 (1945), p. 4.

Theme	Number of articles
Commentary on the Bible	10
Stories from the Bible (including reflections on the life and ministry of Jesus)	12
Church and church ministries	5
Sanctification and the fight against sin	12

The chart underlines that there were equal numbers of articles devoted to questions of spiritual growth[59] and articles on certain biblical narratives. These articles formed more than half of all the spiritual materials in the periodical.

The most frequent topics among articles on sanctification were life under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (5), stages of spiritual growth (4) and the battle against sin (3). The expositions of parts of the Bible usually addressed different episodes within the narratives of Jesus. Most of them were connected with a certain Christian festival (such as the article by A. Karev, "Rays of Bethlehem"[60]) and consisted in retelling the biblical stories. Only two of them (A. Karev, "From Simon son of Jonah to Kephas – Peter",[61] and A. Karev, "The fall of David"[62]) were of a strictly didactic character and demonstrated "ways of holiness" using biblical examples. Two sets of commentaries in *BV* in 1969 were the Commentaries on Luke by E. M., which contained a re-narration of the gospel, and the Commentaries on Ephesians by O. Tärk,[63] which can be considered as an extended sermon on sanctification based on the Epistle. Among the five articles on church ministries, two were doctrinal (A. Karev, "Local church",[64] and S. Fadiukhin, "Teaching about baptism."[65]). Two articles were of a practical character ("Singing and music in communities of our brotherhood",[66] and N. N., "Working

[59] Even some of their titles revealed their content: A.I. Mitskevich, 'Ob osviaschenii' [About sanctification], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 28; S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Nabludai za soboi' [Watch yourself], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 41; M.O.F. 'O terpenii' [About patience], *BV*, vol. 5 (1969), p. 62.

[60] A.V. Karev, 'Luchi Vifleiema' [Rays of Bethlehem], *BV*, vol. 6 (1969), p. 29.

[61] A.V. Karev, 'Ot Simona Ionina do Kify Petra' [From Simon son of Jonah to Cephas–Peter], *BV*, vol. 2 (1969), p. 17.

[62] A.V. Karev, 'Padeniie Davida' [Fall of David], *BV*, vol. 5 (1969), p. 23.

[63] O.A. Tärk, 'Poslaniie Efesianam' [Ephesians], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 28; vol. 2 (1969), p. 27; vol.3 (1969), p. 25; vol. 4 (1969), p. 26; vol. 5 (1969), p. 34; vol. 6 (1969), p. 29.

[64] A.V. Karev, 'Pomestnaia tserokov'' [Local church], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p. 19.

[65] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Ucheniie o kreschenii' [Teaching about baptism], *BV*, vol. 2 (1969), p. 34.

[66] G.I. Pavlenko, V.I. Dikan', L.F. Tkachenko, V.D. Erisov, 'Peniie i muzyka v obschine nashego bratstva' [Singing and music in communities of our brotherhood], *BV*, vol. 2 (1969), p. 41.

on sermons"[67]). One article was about the spiritual growth of a preacher (N. N., "Self-training for Christ's ministers"[68]).

In other words, the great majority of the spiritual material published in *BV* in 1969 was either retellings of biblical episodes or instructions concerning spiritual growth and sanctification as this was seen in the Bible. In subsequent years the structure of the spiritual part of the journal did not change. An analysis of the periodical either in 1979 or in 1989 would produce similar results: authors of *BV* either retold the content of the Bible or exhorted their readers to follow principles of holy living. It is true that compared with the journal *Vestnik Istiny* ("Messenger of the truth", *VI*) published by the CCECB, the percentage of purely devotional articles was relatively small in *BV*. [69] But *BV* presented much more information and educational material than *VI*. Also, the CCECB published several other periodicals and some of them contained no devotional material at all.[70] Only during the period of the major atheistic attack on religion (from the late 1950s to the early 1960s) did *BV* readers experience a disproportionate number of ideological articles, and even then the number of biblically-based expository articles was quite substantial.

It is also the case that the striving for holiness was apparent not only in the spiritual materials but also in articles where authors had little freedom in writing. For example, the ideological influence of the state is conspicuous in the articles devoted to the anniversary of the Communist Revolution in Russia (the article uses the official title 'the Great October Socialist Revolution'). At the same time, even in these articles *BV* authors maintained their commitment to holiness. I have already analyzed an article by Zhidkov, who was so bold as to attempt in 1947 to prove that the Soviet power was an embodiment of the commandments of Christ.[71] But even in the absurd claim that Communist atheists were closer to God than Western Christians, Zhidkov appealed to holiness as an unconditional value. His logic consisted in an exposition of the "righteousness" of the Soviet authorities and a reference to

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[67] N. N., 'Rabota nad propovediami' [Working on sermons], *BV*, vol. 5 (1969), p. 52.

[68] N. N., 'Rabota sluzhitelia Khrista nad soboi' [Self-training for Christ's ministers], *BV*, vol. 4 (1969), p. 42.

[69] It consisted completely of sermons and testimonies.

[70] For example, a small newspaper *Bratskii Listok* ('Fraternal paper') published exclusively documents and informative materials by the CCECB.

[71] See Chapter 6.

Acts 10:34-35: “God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”[72]

In subsequent years, representatives of the AUCECB never again tried to unify Christian holiness and atheistic power. Nevertheless they spoke of the moral perfection of believers as an argument for their usefulness within the socialist society. For example, ten years after Zhidkov’s infamous piece, an anonymous author,[73] writing an article devoted to the Fortieth Anniversary of the Revolution, said:[74]

> Evangelical Christians-Baptists did not close themselves off in their religious frameworks. They went out into the social arena of life bringing to it the moral height that they adopted from the godly teaching of Christ. Diligence, a conscientious attitude to their responsibilities, simplicity in treating people, tenderness in any kind of compassion [lit. “motion of hearts” – A.P.], exceptional honesty and modesty created an atmosphere of acknowledgement and a friendly attitude among the Evangelical Christians-Baptists.[75]

The motif of holiness was less often expressed in material dealing with peace-making. It seems that there were two main reasons for this. First, it was very clear that evangelical believers, like all ordinary Soviet people, were not in control of the issues of war and peace. In practice, nothing depended on the way of life of the Christians, so speeches which linked personal holiness with peace-making only sounded spurious. But even in this situation some authors tried to make efforts to intertwine exhortation to moral excellence with peace-making rhetoric. For instance, V.Kulikov, in his article “Peace, the golden dream of humankind”,[76] claimed that an honest industrious life would hasten the fulfilment of the Isaiah 2:4 prophecy: “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”[77] Such an interpretation of this biblical passage was obviously speculative. Nevertheless, it fulfilled the goal of explaining how believers, according to Kulikov, could influence the course of world history.

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[72] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Tridtstaia godovschina Velikoi Oktiabr’skoi Revoliutsii' [Thirtieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution], *BV*, vol. 6 (1947), p. 6.

[73] The article was preceded by a letter of congratulation to the Prime Minister of the USSR, N. Bulganin. Zhidkov was the first in the list of those who signed this letter. No doubt Zhidkov either wrote or at least approved the subsequent article.

[74] 'Sorokovaia godovschina Velikoi Oktiabr’skoi Revoliutsii i evangel’skiie khristiane-baptisty' [Fortieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution and the Evangelical Christian-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 6 (1957), p. 5.

[75] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[76] V.G. Kulikov, 'Mir – zolotaia mechta chelovechestva' [Peace is the golden dream of humankind], *BV*, vol. 3 (1961), p. 40.

[77] Ibid.

Secondly, authors of peace-making articles usually focused more on criticising "militarists"[78] than on the life of their fellow believers. At the same time, the way they criticized war-hawks was precisely through stressing the unholy nature of the enemies of peace. These enemies, though not usually named, were spiritually dangerous, and were sometimes described as agents of Satan in *BV*. For example, N. Voronezhsky in an article, "Let us dispel the clouds of war",[79] contends that:

> ...war is an invention of Satan, it is a crime against God and consciousness, only the devil and militarists who are his worshippers need war… Some people seek war in which all modern weapons designed for killing God's thinking creatures would be applied. Those are not human beings but bipedal beasts, allies of death and hell even if they act in the name of Christ.[80]

The idea of holiness usually featured in the missionary agenda of the ECB. For example, the sermon "External witness",[81] published in 1948 in *BV*, proposes a typical pattern for "evangelism without words". This kind of evangelism consisted in demonstrating exceptional holiness in a life governed by the Holy Spirit. In the author's mind, genuine holiness is a rare phenomenon.[82] In general, for Evangelical Christians-Baptists, accusations of unrighteousness or insufficient holiness were the ultimate arguments against opponents. The *Initsiativniki* started their movement "under the motto of the purification and sanctification of the church."[83] At the same time, the strategy of the AUCECB in the ideological conflict with the CCECB consisted of proving that the holiness of followers of the illegal Union was less than genuine. For example, they argued that the unfriendly conduct of

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[78] Though usually articles did not clearly explain who these militarists were.

[79] N. Voronezhsky, 'Budem razgoniat' tuchi voiny' [Let us dispel the clouds of war], *BV*, vol. 3 (1961), p. 23.

[80] Ibid., p. 24.

[81] I.R., 'Vneshnee svidetel'stvo' [External witness], *BV*, vol. 1 (1948), p. 40.

[82] The same idea can be found in interviews with ECB leaders of that time. Marcus Bach, for example, speaks about his conversation with a student at Spurgeon's College (seemingly M. Zhidkov) who stated that Soviets had full religious freedom if they proclaimed their religion through their deeds: M. Bach, *God and the Soviets* (New York: Crowell, 1958), pp. 174-175.

[83] From material of the Plenum of the AUCECB in December, 1969 (A.I. Mitskevich, 'Plenum Vsesoiuznogo Soveta evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov' [The plenum of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], *BV*, vol. 1 (1968), p. 66).

Initsiativniki demonstrated their deficiency in piety.[84] A similar argument was used in polemics against Pentecostals.[85]

Finally, ECB preachers were inclined to see the call to holiness literally everywhere. In 1948 there was an interesting hermeneutical invention by N. Tsunenko,[86] who did not tend to interpret the text of the Bible but, rather, scientific facts associated with biblical texts. Thus, in his article, "Diseases of wheat", the author took the text Mt. 13:30 (in the parable of the weeds) as his starting point and then considered the allegorical meaning of real diseases in crops known from the study of agronomy. For instance, brown rust in his opinion means "the dual fungi of sinfulness and pride."[87]

The primacy of the theme of holiness in publications of the AUCECB is indisputable. But it is important to understand the essence of the concept of holiness in Russian Baptist life which, to a great extent, was unique in the wider baptistic world. This means considering the question of facets of holiness in the mentality of the ECB community.

d. Facets of ECB holiness

The description of a holy life-style was a favourite topic in publications of the AUCECB. A number of *BV* articles give significant insights into ECB thinking about the theme of 'holy life'. One of the fullest and most significant accounts of the doctrine of holiness can be found in an essay written by one of the Council members of the AUCECB, and superintendent in Ukraine, Yakov Dukhonchenko. The essay was prepared for an AUCECB Plenum in May, 1978. It was entitled "God's word about sanctification, reaching the full stature of Christ, and wrong doctrines of sanctification".[88] The essay was written in the years when the AUCECB Council was moving to final articulation of its official doctrines.[89] It was a conscious attempt to systematize the insights of the AUCECB on this question, which was the most important

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[84] Ibid.

[85] E.g. see Report of P. Shatrov to the Plenum of the AUCECB on October 22-23, 1975: P.K. Shatrov, 'O edinstve s khristianami very evangel'skoi' [About unity with Christians of the Evangelical Faith], *BV*, vol. 1 (1976), p. 64, uses an argument about the superiority of holiness compared to other manifestations of the Holy Spirit (pp. 69-70).

[86] N. Tsunenko, 'Bolezni pshenitsy' [Diseases of wheat], *BV*, vol. 5 (1948), p. 26.

[87] For another example see N. Tsunenko, *Bol'she solntsa* [Bigger than the sun], *BV*, vol. 2 (1948), p. 71.

[88] Y.K. Dukhonchenko, *Slovo Bozhiie ob osviaschenii, dostizhenii polnogo vozrasta Khristova i nepravil'nykh ucheniiakh ob osviaschenii* [God's word about sanctification, reaching the full stature of Christ, and wrong doctrines of sanctification], *BV*, vol. 5 (1978), p. 27.

[89] Dukhonchenko was the chair of the AUCECB Doctrinal Committee (see ch.5).

issue for them. The reason for writing this piece may have been the appearance of several movements advocating higher levels of holiness and spiritual power in both the official and underground wings of the ECB. The so-called "Tallinn trend" is mentioned once in the documents of the All-Union Council in the report to the Congress of the AUCECB in 1980.[90] Most significant among the new movements was the *Walterovtsy* (or *Smirnovtsy*), named after the founder Walter Kohe. Up to now there have been no publications about *Walterovtsy* so the information here is taken from personal experience and contact with representatives of this movement.

The *Walterovtsy*, a movement seeking spiritual renewal by the exercise of rigorous devotions, were close in spirit to some charismatic trends in evangelical Christianity. Their concern was to reach a condition of perfect holiness. They were supposed to achieve their goal through long prayer meetings in which every single sin was confessed for many hours or even days. They reckoned that real forgiveness should be accompanied by extraordinary visions of saints, angels, and God himself. Eventually, perfect holiness, according to the *Walterovtsy*, could be reached through experiencing physical death and subsequent resurrection. In many respects the ideals of *Walterovtsy* were close to those of Orthodox asceticism. For example, they believed in prayers of intercession for dead relatives of believers.[91]

Dukhonchenko, in his paper, criticizes certain techniques of sanctification practised by opponents of the AUCECB. For example, he attacks the practice of confession during pastoral counselling in the churches of CCECB, a high level of control over the lives of members of underground churches.[92] But the real value of his essay is that it presents an official AUCECB view of the practice of holy living. In the article four facets of holiness are evident: fellowship with Christ, devotional practices, participation in a local church, and suffering. Each of these will be considered.

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[90] *BV*, vol. 1-2 (1980), p. 21. For the charismatic renewal movement in the ECB Tallin Oleviste Church, Estonia in the 1970s, see Pilli *Dance or Die: The Shaping of Estonian Baptist Identity under Communism*, pp. 90-93.

[91] But there was a significant difference between the Orthodox practice of asceticism and experience in evangelical groups. In Orthodoxy, looking for special spiritual experiences is strongly forbidden.

[92] Dukhonchenko, 'Slovo Bozhiie ob osviaschenii, dostizhenii polnogo vozrasta Khristova i nepravil'nykh ucheniiakh ob osviaschenii' [God's word about sanctification, reaching the full stature of Christ, and wrong doctrines of sanctification], p. 30.

1. Fellowship with Christ

In Dukhonchenko's article, as in many similar pieces in *BV*, holiness seems to be the private business of every individual. Social relationships seem to be almost completely excluded from the process of sanctification. Indeed, *a priori* social life is opposed to the holy life. Mainstream society, the state, the family, and the church are places where a believer should demonstrate his/her holiness. However, it is quite apparent that, for Dukhonchenko, these institutions do not contribute, as institutions, to spiritual formation. He devotes a chapter of his essay[93] to proving that "saints" should not ignore people around them and that they ought to be normal members of their families and the society around them. Such an emphasis means that it was common to believe that personal holiness exempted Christians from any social obligations.

At the same time, there was a deep desire for fellowship. The principal condition of being holy was incorporation into the holy community with its standards and norms. "To be in union with Christ", "to follow Christ", "to obey Christ (or the Holy Spirit)", and similar expressions reinforced the well-known priority of following the model of life presented in and idealized by the community of faith. Almost all authors who wrote about the holy life felt that this point was of greatest importance. So virtually every article on holiness in *BV* starts with a call to spiritual change, through fellowship with Christ. Yet believers never equated "being in Christ" to "being in the church". However, communities of faith conveyed an image of Christ, so that the reality of "being in Christ" was indisputable among those who had experienced conversion.

Dukhonchenko expresses the demand for the spiritual incorporation very precisely when he proposes "fellowship with Christ"[94] as the first point in the agenda of a holy life. Actually, Dukhonchenko draws from Kargel's ideas about "abiding in Christ", claiming the same but in a more obscure way than did Kargel.[95] Because he was in the specific situation of arguing with "extremists" (*Walterovtsy* and others), Dukhonchenko completely eliminates any mystical aspect of "being in Christ". His vision of fellowship with Christ is very practical. It includes two aspects: a negative one that consists in fighting against sin, and a positive one that implies fulfilling the commandments of Christ. The negative aspect of being in Christ was discussed in the previous chapter. Life without sin meant for ECB members a sober life and abstinence from "rough sins": smoking, sexual pleasure, gambling and

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[93] Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[94] Ibid., p.30

[95] Kargel in his description of the holy life distinguishes between 'knowing Jesus', 'being in Jesus', and 'surrender to the Holy Spirit'. Dukhonchenko merges these three points into one.

swearing. Also, absolute holiness excluded shortcomings in the ethical sphere: stealing, lies, anger. The fulfilment of Christ's commandments had especially to do with the commandment of love to others, which in the Orthodox tradition was considered as THE commandment of Christ.[96] Sometimes following the commandments of Christ had the narrower meaning of forgiveness or of love for enemies.[97]

Sometimes certain passages of Scriptures were presented in *BV* as containing the expression of God's will in relation to fellowship with Christ. The Sermon on the Mount was one such passage.[98] The Sermon on the Mount was very important in the doctrine of Leo Tolstoy, who claimed that only this passage contained the presentation of the genuine teachings of Christ.[99] Since Tolstoy had the reputation of being a liberal thinker or even a heretic, some evangelicals at the beginning of the twentieth century (such as V. Martsinkovsky[100]) disagreed strongly with him. They argued that the Sermon on the Mount was a description of the unattainable ideal of the Kingdom of God. This ideal was given by Christ to prove the sinfulness of the human race, but even through personal relationship with Christ it could not be fulfilled in practice.[101] *BV* itself never criticized Tolstoy and it seems that the insights of some of its authors were quite similar to that of the great Russian writer. According to some ECB authors, "the ten commandments are laws given to people by God so their significance cannot be removed".[102] But the AUCECB stressed that these commandments belonged to the Old Testament so their literal interpretation was not always acceptable for Christians.[103] The Ten Commandments were sometimes discussed in the

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[96] Nikolai Berdyayev, *Filosofiia svobodnogo dukha* [Philosophy of the free spirit] (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), pp. 444-460.

[97] Ibid.

[98] E.g. A.V. Karev, 'Uroki dla veruiuschikh iz evangeliia Matfeia' [Lessons for believers from the Gospel according to Mathew], *BV*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 42.

[99] The short version of Tolstoy's doctrine about the primacy of the Sermon on the Mount can be found in his novel *Voskreseniie* [Sunday]: in *Sovraniie sochinenii v 14 tomakh*, v.13, Moscow, Gosudarstvennoie Izdatelstvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1953.

[100] Vladimir Martsinkovskii, *Zapiski veruiushchego* [Believer's notes] (Novosibirsk: «Posokh»,1994), pp. 96-97; V.A. Popov, *Stopy blagovestnika: zhizn' i trudy V.G.Pavlova* [Footsteps of the evangelist: life and works of V.G. Pavlov]; (Moscow: Blagovestnik, 1996).

[101] Ibid., p. 145.

[102] R.K., 'Nashi gosti' [Our guests], *BV*, vol. 2(1990), p.20

[103] See I.I.Motorin, 'O sviaschennykh knigakh Vetkhogo i Novogo Zavetov' [About the sacred books of the Old and New Testaments], *BV*, vol. 2(1955), p.33

context of disputes with Seventh-Day Adventists about the Sabbath, although this discussion took place only in oral conversations and do not appear in written form.[104]

The AUCECB, in contrast to the CCECB, which practised so called "church covenants",[105] never proposed detailed instructions covering every aspect of life. Ultimately personal guidance and the customs of a local community defined what was seen as good or bad. It seems that particular details of holiness standards differed from region to region in the AUCECB. In 1986 the author of a textbook on Christian Ethics, I. Chekalov, publicly claimed that television might have a positive influence on someone's personal development. It is noteworthy that in his argument he relies on the results of foreign research which were published in the secular newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (Soviet Russia). Chekalov admitted that ECB members did not have a uniform opinion concerning the possibility of watching TV in relation to holiness, and he called for mutual tolerance between advocates and adversaries of television. It seems that in earlier times watching TV could be considered as a sin by some believers. At the same time, evidence exists that leaders of the AUCECB took for granted the legitimacy of using television in the 1960s,[106] in the 1950s,[107] and even in the 1940s.[108] As a sign of the ongoing debate, however, the Moscow Baptist Church felt the need to declare officially in the 1980s that watching TV was not a sin.[109]

It is evident that leaders of the official Evangelical Christians-Baptists were never narrowly legalistic about every aspect of personal conduct and that they never had absolute rules for measuring holiness, although as noted before there were "rough sins" which had to be avoided. "Fellowship with Christ" for them was an expression of their personal faith and also of their ongoing commitment to the spirituality that was at the heart of their communities of faith.

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[104] There is one mention of this debate, in the article by the Latvian pastor, E. Huns, a tribute to P. Laubert, one of the leaders of the church in Riga: F.E. Huns, 'K 80-letiiu presvitera Petra Lauberta' [For the 80th anniversary of presbyter Petr Laubert], *BV*, vol. 6 (1955), p. 54.

[105] Informal charters of local churches.

[106]" Leaders of the AUCECB expressed surprised in the 1960s that American Amish Mennonites did not have TV sets in their houses: I.I. Motorin, 'Zametki o prebyvanii delegatsii VSEKhB v SShA' [Notes about the visit of the delegation of the AUCECB to the USA], *BV*, vol. 4 (1964), p. 68. Also see "What was and what came", *BV*, vol. 5 (1967), p. 9.

[107] For example, V. Kholm in his article "Sing to the Lord" compares the search for God's will with tuning a TV: 'Poite Gospodu' [Sing to the Lord], *BV*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 31.

[108] A. Karev, 'Baku-Erevan-Tbilisi', *BV*, vol. 4 (1947), p. 13. Karev wrote: 'I wish science could invent a TV so that people could see each other at a distance, and more than that, talk to each other' (p. 16).

[109] Testimony of I.M. Korabliov, the former senior presbyter of the Central Baptist Church in Moscow.

2. Devotional practices

After discussing fellowship with Christ, Dukhonchenko turns to crucial spiritual exercises, which he sees as consisting of reading the Bible and prayer.[110] On these points he follows Kargel's work "Christ is our sanctification". But, in contrast to Kargel, he does not distinguish between different devotional practices. What Dukhonchenko proposes as his second facet of sanctification could be understood as preserving an internal conversation with God.

Devotional reading of the Bible, in this context, should not be confused with biblical studies. There are three major instances when the expression "biblical studies" occurs on the pages of *BV*: in material focused on professional ministers (related to their training or their biographies), in material about foreign conferences, and in publications about or of biblical commentaries. In other words, Bible studies were considered an activity of specialists or under the control of specialists. By contrast, devotional reading was a normal activity of any converted Christian. This reading did not imply interpretation. Its goal consisted in the sustaining of a proper spiritual condition. Usually, it was compared with nourishment or breathing, as in this *BV* article in 1980:

> In God's Word, like in a pure mirror, a person sees all his/her imperfections. Attentive and reverent reading of the Holy Scriptures is the best way to know oneself, to cleanse and purify oneself from sinful defilement and to stand before God in 'wedding clothes'. Reading the Bible should be accompanied by prayer. Feed your soul with the imperishable food and breathe with the atmosphere of prayer! It will secure your spiritual health.[111]

Reading the Bible was part and parcel of a prayer-time, and was seen as a means for reinforcing the effects of prayers. So it is no surprise that in *BV* many more articles were devoted to prayer than to reading of the Bible.

An article by V. Kulikov,[112] "About prayer", [113] is typical of articles on prayer in the devotional life.[114] The article is full of rapturous exclamations, lively metaphors, and poetical

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[110] For some reason, Dukhonchenko does not use the word 'prayer', replacing it with various expressions involving the idea of a conversation with the Holy Spirit.

[111] V.P. (seemingly Vladimir Popov), 'Razmyshleniia nad knigoi Neemii' [Meditations on the Book of Nehemiah], *BV*, vol. 4 (1980), p. 31.

[112] This was published under the initials V.K. As noted previously, Kulikov was the chief editor of *BV* from 1971. He died in 2007.

[113] V.K., 'O molitve' [About prayer], *BV*, vol. 3 (1963), p. 36

[114] For example, Y.I. Zhidkov, 'V shkole molitvy' [In the school of prayer], *BV*, vol. 2 (1949), p. 6; N.V. Naronovich, 'Molitva' [Prayer], *BV*, vol. 2 (1969), p. 41.

quotations. For example, he quotes the Russian poet M. Lermontov,[115] whose poetry was quite secular but whose romantic attitude toward prayer charmed the AUCECB so much that some of his poems were included in their hymnal. Kulikov attempts some sort of classification of prayers, proposing different types of prayers: private or public, being performed kneeling or standing, petitions or praises. He stresses that praises are the supreme form of prayer while petitions might contain dangers (for example, if the praying person asks something wrong from God). According to Kulikov, the ideal prayer is the prayer of the elders of Revelation 4, which is timeless and unconditional adoration of God. In other words, a devotional time was not considered as a time that helped to solve earthly problems but rather as part of a journey to the heaven.

Kulikov, like other authors in *BV*, does not mention details that should feature in prayer or techniques of devotion. He does not recommend praying at any certain time, nor does he propose any plans for personal devotions that were approved by the AUCECB. His recommendations are very general, as if concrete devotional practices are the private business of each individual. This lack of instruction in the organization of devotions was probably a result of the AUCECB tendency to universality. In this the AUC leaders presented a contrast to leaders of the CCECB who strove to unify all the spiritual practices of their followers. The authors of *BV* understood that any proposal of concrete schemes for spiritual exercises might raise protests from different congregations with different customs. Such proposals could be inappropriate in the diverse situations in which Russian Baptists were placed. Many authors, including Dukhonchenko in his essay on holiness,[116] stress that prayers do not have to be limited to only a devotional time. Believers had to be flexible in choosing the time and place for their dialogue with God. As an ideal, Christians should in every moment of their life remember the presence of God. Kulikov underlines: "We can praise our Lord everywhere and always. We should seek his face and crave for a close dialogue with him."[117]

3. Participation in a local church

When describing the way of holiness, both Kargel and Dukhonchenko place participation in a local church after "union with Christ" and personal devotions. Church was not considered as a sacred place for worship services, as in the Orthodox Church. The church was the people of

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[115] V.K., 'O molitve' [About prayer], p. 36.

[116] Dukhonchenko, 'Slovo Bozhiie ob osviaschenii, dostizhenii polnogo vozrasta Khristova i nepravil'nykh ucheniiakh ob osviaschenii' [God's word about sanctification, reaching the full age of Christ, and wrong doctrines of sanctification], pp. 30-31.

[117] V.K., 'O molitve' [About prayer], p. 40.

God. But there was a desire to obey Christ's commandments concerning baptism and communion. ECB members usually had a very negative attitude toward all sorts of rituals, but they saw these ordinances as a result of a direct order of Christ himself.[118] The church was seen as "God's house", that is, the family of God (in Russian the word "house" *dom* can have the meaning of "family"). In Dukhonchenko's explanation, Christians had to be prepared for communal life in heaven, and so they should learn to live together on earth, similar to the rocks of the temple in Jerusalem which had been prepared outside of Israel for the construction of the temple – God's house. Unity and peace inside congregations were of greatest value. The metaphor of the church as the body of Christ was not prevalent in the discourse on spiritual formation, and if *BV* authors used the body metaphor, they did it in the context of unity of the church. The importance of unanimity in local churches made the question of church discipline one of the central questions in discussions about Christ's church and issues connected with discipline and of disciplined spirituality features regularly in articles in *BV*.[119]

The expression "body of Christ" was more commonly used in the literal sense of the physical body of Jesus rather than as a metaphor for the church. Even when this metaphor formed the theme of an article,[120] it did not imply that the church was functioning as a single organism to reach a certain goal. The church was not primarily considered as having a task to perform. Rather it was a family which existed for its own sake. The church needed no other goal than the cultivation of the communal life of believers. Certainly nobody would deny that spreading the Gospel was the mission of the church, but that was not of primary significance. Fostering believers in their faith was a major reason for the existence of a local church. This took place primarily through preaching, but also in controlling the behaviour of church members and determining punishment for sins.[121]

Although Evangelical Christians-Baptists did not divide the church into clergy and lay persons, there was a special class of believers who had the title of "ministers" (*sluzhiteli*). The idea of *sluzhiteli* was very different from the idea of professional pastors. Usually they

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[118] In K.V. Somov, 'Essei i khristiane' [Essenes and Christians], *BV*, vol. 3 (1964), p. 59.

[119] E.g. Y.I. Zhidkov, 'O tserkovnoi distsipline' [About church discipline], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 6; N.A. Levindanto, 'Blagochiniie pomestnykh tserkvei ili tserkovnaia distsiplina' [Piety of local churches or church discipline], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1955), p. 10.

[120] E.g. O. Tärk, 'Dialog Khrista s tserkoviu' [Dialogue of Christ with the Church], *BV*, vol. 1 (1947), p. 42

[121] Levindanto, 'Blagochiniie pomestnykh tserkvei ili tserkovnaia distsiplina' [Piety of local churches or church discipline], pp. 16-19

had no salary from the church.[122] Spiritual or secular education or any kind of special training was considered desirable but was not a necessary qualification for ministers. In practice, most of them did not have any education beyond the basic level of secondary school. Also they were not necessarily ordained. Only some of them, namely those designated presbyters (pastors) and deacons, were formally ordained. At the same time, *sluzhiteli* cannot be called lay ministers. The ECB did not think in terms of every church member carrying on some sort of service in the church. Rather, these ministers were considered as a spiritual elite, consisting of a few chosen ones in the congregation. The status of *sluzhiteli* had to be won by personal qualities and recognition by church leaders. Although the title of "minister" was not a legal term in the Statutes of the AUCECB it can be found in many official documents. For example, the qualification awarded to graduates of the Bible Correspondence Courses was "spiritual minister of the church".[123]

The concept of holiness was closely connected in ECB thinking to the status of minister. This can be demonstrated from an article by S. Fadiukhin on "Requirements for God's servants".[124] Fadiukhin claims that neither education nor skills make a Christian into a church minister. Indeed, there are just three criteria for winning the right to perform this ministry. These are: being deeply spiritual in following Christ, making sufficient progress in reading the Bible, and having a deep life of prayer. Ministers did not differ qualitatively from ordinary church members, but were seen as significantly advanced in practising holiness. Dukhonchenko, in an article about church ministers,[125] notes: "Commitment and obedience, submission and surrender to the Lord are the most important qualities of the Lord's ministers."[126] Holiness gave someone an authentic ministry. Also, their spirituality made ministers the right persons to interpret the Bible. Fadiukhin commented: "Our evangelical Baptist brotherhood accepts that every believer can get God's revelation for learning and instructions during reading of the Holy Scriptures… This is the strength (of the Union) but also its weakness because wrong interpretation of the Holy Scriptures leads to perplexity among inexperienced believers. That is why each one of us ministers should remember that it

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[122] Mitrokhin, *Baptizm* [Baptists], pp. 217-218.

[123] One of these diplomas belongs to the author of this dissertation.

[124] S.P. Fadiukhin, 'Trebovaniia, pred'iavliaiemyie sluzhiteliam bozhiim' [Requirements for God's servants], *BV*, vol. 3 (1978), p. 42.

[125] Y.K. Dukhonchenko, 'O sluzhiteliakh tserkvi' [About church ministers], *BV*, vol. 3 (1971), p. 58.

[126] Ibid., p. 60.

is our great responsibility to study and to interpret the Holy Scriptures."[127] A minister, in the eyes of the AUCECB, was primarily an instructor of those who were at a less advanced stage in their spiritual development.

4. Suffering

Kargel in his book "Christ is our sanctification" specifically stresses that suffering is an inevitable facet of holiness. He complains that this truth is not properly understood among "God's children."[128] According to him, suffering is not to be seen primarily as punishment for sins or a result of the opposition of the world to God's people. In his thinking, suffering is intrinsic to the life of the believer. He emphasizes - with capital letters - his main thesis that "the way of suffering is the way of his [God's] children."[129] Dukhonchenko softens Kargel's expression and speaks about "calamities of life."[130] But his idea is the same: suffering is an essential part of a holy life.

What was the purpose of suffering according to Kargel and according to AUCECB leaders who followed his thinking? The main purpose consists in the development of saints. Suffering is the only proper environment for growing in holiness. This does not mean that when believers meet suffering God is punishing them for certain sins, though this might occur. But God may send suffering as a preventive measure, to keep believers from sin. Suffering, said Y. Zhidkov, helps a person to escape sins and "to smother them before they have been conceived."[131] This he calls "participation in Christ's sufferings".[132] It is clear that such an understanding of suffering led to a measure of passivity on the part of evangelical Christians. They believed that things which caused suffering had no ultimate importance, since suffering was inevitable. It is no surprise that *BV* authors did not blame the atheistic state regime for any of their disasters. Moreover, AUCECB publications encouraged Soviet

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[127] Fadiukhin, 'Trebovaniia, pred'iavliaiemyie sluzhiteliam bozhiim' [Requirements for God's servants], p. 44.

[128] Kargel, *Sobraniie sochinenii* [Selected works], p. 105.

[129] Ibid., p. 109.

[130] Dukhonchenko, 'Slovo Bozhiie ob osviaschenii, dostizhenii polnogo vozrasta Khristova i nepravil'nykh ucheniiakh ob osviaschenii' [God's word about sanctification, reaching the full stature of Christ, and wrong doctrines of sanctification], p. 32.

[131] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Uchastiie v stradaniiakh Ego' [Participation in his sufferings], *BV*, vol. 2 (1954), pp. 5-6.

[132] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

believers to think that they were fortunate compared with, for example, Christians in the USA who were forced to participate in the Vietnam War.[133]

But writing on suffering could be interpreted by the authorities as "slander about the socialistic reality", so the writers of the AUCECB addressed this theme with great caution. There is a parallel with the theme of the sins of unbelievers. If they stressed suffering, believers could contradict the official view that believers in the USSR were the happiest Christians in the world. Statistically the word "suffering" occurred more frequently in descriptions of the negative sides of capitalism (the hard life of people in capitalist countries, World War II, and the persecution of believers before the October Revolution) than in the context of spiritual formation. The greatest difference between followers of the legal AUC Union and the CCECB was that the underground churches pointed openly to the mainstream society as an evil power and, at the same time, the major source of suffering.[134] But the CCECB agreed with the AUCECB in the recognition of the universality of sufferings *per se*.

Kargel's doctrine of suffering as part of the holy life unavoidably implied that believers saw themselves as separate from society. Communist ideologues often assaulted ECB on that ground. For example, Eduard Filimonov from the Institute of Scientific Atheism wrote in 1968 that the "anti-humanistic character of the Baptist ideal of personality" was expressed in their praising of suffering, which, he rightly commented, was "considered as an obligatory condition for moral excellence".[135] In the final period of its history the AUCECB tried to overcome such an attitude. This became a critical issue, especially in the early 1990s, when mass evangelization programmes failed mostly because local churches could not renounce their role as suffering saints on the margins of mainstream society. In 1992 and 1993 the publication by ECB leaders of Billy Graham's works on the problem of suffering, published as articles in *BV*,[136] indicated that they clearly understood that the traditional orientation toward suffering as the standard of spirituality had very negative consequences for the development of the evangelical movement in Russia. Graham's approach to the problem

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[133] Ibid., p. 7.

[134] The position of the CCECB is expressed very clearly, for example, in the article 'Prochitat' v chetverg pered prazdnikom Paskhi' [To read in Thursday before Passover], *Bratskii listok*, vol. 4 (1974), pp. 1-2.

[135] E.G. Filimonov, *Baptizm i Gumanizm* [Baptists and Humanism] (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), p. 110.

[136] B. Graham, 'O stradaniiakh veruiuschikh' [About the suffering of believers], *BV*, vol. 2 (1992), p. 16; *BV*, vol. 3 (1992), p. 11; 'Problema stradanii v mire' [The problem of suffering in the world], *BV*, vol. 4 (1992), p. 26; vol. 5 (1992), p. 10; vol. 6 (1992), p. 31; vol. 2 (1993), p. 23; vol. 3 (1993), p. 29; vol. 5 (1993), p. 14.

was much more balanced.[137] At the same time, it seems that the AUCECB leadership was too late in its efforts to change the mentality of existing church members, who had known suffering as something intrinsic to their experience.

e. Conclusion

An analysis of published texts of the AUCECB demonstrates that the pursuit of a holy life was a central concern of evangelical believers in the USSR. It was crucial in the formation of their spiritual identity. The ECB concept of holiness combined evangelical ideas and Russian Orthodox (and even pre-Orthodox) spiritual traditions. From the traditional perspective, holiness consisted not so much in ethical behavior as in presenting a contrast to the routines of society through manifesting God's extraordinary presence. Holiness implied intensive emotional experience, beyond rationality. The paradigm of the holy life for Evangelical Christians and Baptists was formulated by I. Kargel. His doctrine of holiness emphasised the need for Christ not only as the one who saves from sin but also as the source of sanctification. Many of his ideas were rooted in the traditions of the holiness movements in England, especially Keswick. However, Kargel's teaching included thinking about holiness that was formulated in the Russian setting, such as the view that suffering was integral to holiness.

Kargel's insights on holiness were reproduced and developed in the publications of the AUCECB. Many ECB leaders borrowed his idea of the primary importance of personal sanctification and propagated this through the pages of *BV*. The concept of fellowship with Christ formed the core of the ECB's understanding of sanctification. This concept was not formulated very strictly. It implied following divine commandments recorded in the Bible but the interpretation and application of those commandments could vary. Indeed, the concept of the holy life, although expressed in biblical terms and applied to the individual, also meant a call to follow the norms accepted in ECB communities. The understanding of the idea of fellowship with Christ explains other elements of sanctification such as devotional practices, participation in life together and opposition to the mainstream society - which was formulated in terms of suffering. The ways in which the ECB communities interpreted biblical texts produced the standards of holiness which constituted the spiritual identity of the AUCECB. So ECB spirituality was directly interrelated with the ways in which the biblical texts were linked to reality. Those ways will be considered in the chapter that follows.

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[137] In Billy Graham's approach, the sufferings of Christians happen as a result of conflict between Christian virtues and the sinful world. At the same time, *a priori* they are not an obligatory part of Christian life.

Chapter 10

ECB publications and the grand sacred narrative

a. Introduction

The previous chapter argued that the pursuit of personal holiness was the core of ECB spirituality. This aspect of ECB identity was connected with Russian tradition, including Orthodox tradition, but was principally shaped by evangelical thinking. In this chapter there is deeper probing of the way in which these spiritual ideals were drawn from the Bible. This is a crucial part of the examination of the AUCECB as a hermeneutical community. This chapter will propose a specific understanding of the reading of the Bible within the AUCECB tradition. Through looking at *BV* and other written material, the argument will be developed that the AUCECB's spiritual ideals were inspired by their consideration of the Bible as a Grand Sacred Narrative. In turn this view of the Bible played its part in further shaping their spirituality, with its strong emphasis on holiness.

b. The Sacred Grand Narrative of the ECB

1. Narrative orientated thinking

As already noted in Part 1 of the thesis, the hermeneutical approaches to be found among Russian Evangelical Christians and Baptists have never followed any one particular method and the main interpreters have not used any consistent set of interpretational rules. The very idea of coming to the Bible on the basis of abstract theory was alien to the beliefs of most Evangelical Christians and Baptists since they could not imagine Christianity outside the realm of daily practice. They perceived reality, including the reality of life as Christians, as a historical narrative in which they were directly involved. This way of thinking was evident in the AUCECB. Even in the most "theoretical" document of the AUCECB, "The Doctrine of Evangelical Christians-Baptists" (of 1985), considered in chapter 5 in Part 2, every theological point is explained through the prism of a certain biblical narrative. For example, God is omnipotent (*vsemoguschiy*) because he introduced himself to Abraham as God Almighty (*vsemoguschiy*) (Gen. 17:1).[1]

The narrative-orientated thinking of the AUCECB can be demonstrated more broadly with reference to one of the major debates which has divided evangelicals: Calvinism and

[1] *EKhB*, p. 14.

Arminianism. Russian evangelicals were largely Arminian in their theology, with Kargel, who was indebted to holiness strands of British evangelicalism, being a major influence. In his "Law of the Spirit of Life", produced towards the end of his life, Kargel wrote:

> On the question of faith, a person has the right of free choice; he can choose to believe if he wants and he can receive by faith the mercy of God, and likewise, he can reject faith and therefore reject salvation. Thus, God, in eternity [before time], as He was predetermining and deciding, did not take away human freedom... God's foreknowledge of His elected ones leads them to being predestined.[2]

In recent years Baptist leaders in Russia and Ukraine have been concerned about the spread of the Calvinist idea of predestination.[3] To oppose the Calvinist influence, AUCECB writers were consulted. However, *BV* has almost no materials that would support the anti-Calvinist position. The exception is an article in 1966.[4] Calvin is described on the pages of *BV* only as one of the leaders of the Reformation without any critical evaluation of his teaching.[5] Arminius is not even mentioned in *BV*. Such silence on the burning issue of predestination by the Union publication has puzzled investigators.

This paradox, however, is easily explained. The authors of *BV* never thought about predestination outside the context of the biblical narrative. They were not concerned to construct a systematic theology. As soon as expositions of biblical episodes where the idea of predestination might be appropriate are examined, abundant material on the topic can be found. For example, preachers who based their articles on the birth of Jacob and Esau almost always turned their attention to the issue of predestination. An excellent example of such articles is the piece by S. Fadiukhin "Concerning God's special love for the chosen ones".[6] The author interprets this crucial biblical episode in terms of God's love, and his narrative approach allows him to find arguments against the idea of double predestination – of some to salvation and others to damnation. Fadiukhin points to Esau's advantages. His life seems to

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[2] Ivan Kargel, *Zakon Dukha Zhizni* [The Law of the Spirit of Life] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia Dl'a Vsekh, 2003), pp. 194-195.

[3] See G.A. Gololob, *Ustoiat' v istine. Apologiia Arminianstva* [To remain in the truth: Apology for Arminianism] (Moscow: Dukhovnoe vozrozhdenie, 2008); G.A. Gololob, *Svoboda voli: mezhdu rabstvom i proizvolom* [Freedom of the will: between slavery and arbitrariness] (St. Petersburg: Bibliia dl'a vsekh, 2008).

[4] V. Slobodnyak, the pastor from Zaporozhye (Ukraine), wrote an article, 'Voprosy dukhovnoy zhizni' [Questions of spiritual life], *BV*, vol. 4 (1966), p. 43, in which he expressed strong criticism of the idea of predestination.

[5] A.V. Karev, 'Zhan Kal'vin i kal'vinizm' [Jean Calvin and Calvinism], *BV*, vol. 4 (1958), p. 63.

[6] *BV*, vol. 5 (1978), pp. 17-19.

be easier than Jacob's. For Fadiukhin, the words "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:13) speak of God's special love to Jacob in granting him "spiritual" blessings while Esau chose earthly blessings. Moreover, God's special love to Jacob entailed his experiencing more suffering than his brother in his earthly life and, thus, made him advance in his spiritual formation. But "quantitatively" God loved both Jacob and Esau equally.[7] Fadiukhin does not try to generalize his conclusion or create a theory. He simply explains a biblical episode that might raise doubts about the "natural" idea of a free human will.

An even more conspicuous example of narrative-orientated thinking in this area can be observed in the article "What the Bible says" by A. Karev.[8] In the first part of his article subtitled "About predestination", Karev delivers seemingly the most detailed account of the dispute between Calvinists and Arminians in all the AUCECB publications. Nevertheless, as soon as Karev feels that he needs to present the "right" position, he stops any theoretical discussion and, instead, addresses a series of narrative episodes from the life of Jesus in which, he argues, the Saviour appeals to human will in his exhortations to his hearers. So in Karev's article, Jesus, not the author of the article, responds to Augustine and Calvin and criticizes their flawed theological concepts. The biblical narrative and the AUCECB narrative were seen as closely connected.

2. A Grand Narrative

"Grand Narrative" is a term from the book by Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*,[9] where Lyotard defines grand narratives as global narratives proposed by modernist theories for explanation of the world. The ideas from his book came into Russia from 1998.[10] I am adapting Lyotard's idea to explore the sacred stories of ECB. Lyotard would call these stories myths.[11] Lyotard criticised grand narratives as a source of imperialistic dominance. In this context mythology can be a way to describe the biblical narratives that shaped the literature of the AUCECB, although ECB leaders themselves denied the suitability of this label, arguing that their beliefs were grounded in true

[7] Ibid., p. 18.

[8] 'Chto govorit Bibliia (glavnyie doktriny biblii)', *BV*, vol. 1 (1964), p.55.

[9] This was published by Manchester University Press in 1984. The first edition was in 1979. Some biographical information is found in G. Hens-Piazza, 'Lyotard', in A.K.M. Adam, ed., *Handbook of postmodern biblical interpretation* (St.Louis, Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 160-166.

[10] J.F. Lyotard, *Sostoianie postmoderna* [The Postmodern Condition] (Moscow: ALETEIIa, 1998), p. 11.

[11] Ibid., p.56.

historical facts which could not be denied. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the usage of the term "myth" and "mythical" as well as "Grand Sacred Narrative".

There is no academic agreement about the meaning of the word "myth." The careful article on "myth" written by Lydie Kocova in the *Dictionary of European Baptist Life and Thought*[12] distinguishes between different definitions of myth. According to this article, in theological discourse the word "myth" refers to a literary form of ancient literature.[13] It is not to be contrasted with "truth". A.F. Losev, a Russian philologist, wrote: "Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. … They may recount the activities of deities, their love affairs, their family relationships, their friendships and enmities, their victories and defeats."[14] The Bible, for ECB writers, contained "truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past", but biblical stories also offered to ECB members an alternative to the official Marxist world view - which was based on a Grand Narrative in Lyotard's sense of this word. The ECB Sacred Grand Narrative was in this sense an alternative to the narrative about the Communist revolution and the progressive development of the Soviet regime.

The word "myth" can, I would argue, be applied to the biblical narratives utilised in ECB publications if the definition of "myth" is based on the work of A.F. Losev. He wrote "Dialectics of myth" (1990),[15] "Myth is an extended magical name", (1994),[16] "Absolute dialectics – absolute mythology" (1994)[17]and other studies. His analysis of myth is particularly significant for this study because he shared the same social environment as the AUCECB. Losev drew from *Imiaslavie*, an early twentieth-century mystical movement in the Russian Orthodox Church which claimed that the name of God is God himself. It was shaped by the thinking of a monk, Illarion, about the Orthodox Jesus Prayer.[18] *Imiaslavie* attracted

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[12] *Dictionary of European Baptist Life and Thought* (ed. Briggs, J.H.Y., Prague: International Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009)

[13] Ibid., pp. 342-343.

[14] W.R.Bascom, 'The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives, in *Journal of American Folklore*, v. 78, 1965, pp. 3-20, p.4 .

[15] A.F. Losev, *Dialektika mifa* [Dialectics of myth] (Moscow: Pravda, 1990).

[16]A.F. Losev, 'Mif – razvernutoie magicheskoie ima' [Myth is an extended magical name], in *Mif. Chislo. Suschnost* [Myth. Number. Essence] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Mysl'", 1994).

[17] A.F. Losev, 'Absoliutnaia dialektika - absoliutnaia mifologiia' [Absolute dialectics – absolute mythology], in *Mif. Chislo. Suschnost* [Myth. Number. Essence] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Mysl'", 1994).

[18] It was started through monk Illarion's meditations on Jesus' prayer. Ilarion, *Na gorakh Kavkaza: Besedy dvukh startsev pustynnikov o vnutrennem edinenii s Gospodom nashikh serdets, cherez molitvu Iisus Khristovu ili Dukhovnaia deiatel'nost' sovremennykh pustynniko v*[On the hills of Caucasus: Talks of two

followers such as S. Bulgakov,[19] P. Florensky[20] and V. Solovyov.[21] Losev's evaluation of myth was positive. He sees myth as something "miraculous", in the sense of being beyond reasoning or critique,[22] as "personalized", in the sense that it affects personal identity, and as a specific supra-rational "history given in words".[23] Losev's exploration of myth involves the philosophical apparatus of classical German philosophy, but drawing from his thinking I wish to apply it in this way: "myth is a sacred narrative that has an absolute authority for the people who are bearers of the myth, and this forms their worldview and behaviour."[24]

Even a very authoritative and influential narrative may have certain limits in terms of the acceptance and trust accorded to it. There may be critical assessment by readers. But myth is a grand narrative whose absolute authority is beyond doubt. The Bible, for the AUCECB, was in this category. Neither reasoning nor any analysis could affect the sacred narrative. Nor were evangelicals alone in this view of the Bible. The acceptance of such an attitude in Russian Orthodoxy may be demonstrated by the words of the famous Orthodox missionary of the nineteenth century, Metropolitan Filaret, who used to say that "if the Sacred Scripture claimed it was not the whale which swallowed Jonah but Jonah swallowed the whale, it had to be trusted without questioning."[25] In other words, the narrative, which in a strictly defined context I am calling "myth", stands above sense reality. The reality may be interpreted and evaluated only through the prism of the myth.[26] Any personal experience seems trifling and insignificant in the presence of the absolute dominance of the mythological presentation of reality.

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elderly pilgrims about inner unity with the Lord of our hearts through the prayer of Jesus Christ, or Spiritual activity of modern pilgrims] (Batalpashinsk, 1910).

[19] In his work on the idea of divine *Sophia*: V.V. Zen'kovskii, *Istoriia russkoi filosofii* [History of Russian Philosophy] (Moscow: EKSMO-PRESS; Khar'kov: Folio, 2001), p. 869.

[20] Ibid., p. 853.

[21] F.C. Copleston, *Russian religious philosophy: selected aspects* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England: Search Press, 1988; Notre Dame, Ind., USA: University of Notre Dame, 1988), pp. 144-147.

[22] Also seen as 'absolute' and 'indisputable'.

[23] Losev, *Mif. Chislo. Suschnost* [Myth. Number. Essence], p. 195.

[24] In this I do not include the ontological dimension of Losev's understanding of myth since it is not important for this study.

[25] I. Kryvel'ev, *Kniga o biblii* [Book about the Bible] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1959), p. 222.

[26] G. Codevilla and other authors have noted that communists who aspired to seeing Marxist revolution in Western countries in the second half of the 20th century were inspired by devotion fuelled by mythological acceptance of the world. See, e.g., G. Codevilla, *Attitude of the Soviet state towards religion* (Milan: Russia Cristiana, 1971), pp. 17-45.

3. The biblical narrative

The evangelical commitment to conversion and to holiness, based on a certain way of interpreting biblical texts, was the glue which kept together the AUCECB. Historical tradition played a minor part compared, for example, with its role in the Orthodox Church. This was the weakness of the AUCECB, and, at the same time, its strength. The authorities could not eliminate Baptist churches in the same way as Orthodox churches, simply by destroying their buildings and preventing regular worship meetings. The inspiration for the evangelicals was their experience of the power of the biblical narrative in their own lives. At the same time, the interpreters of the Bible, the preachers and writers, were the real rulers of the Union. The skill of biblical interpretation gave power over people. So the AUCECB was a hermeneutical community not only because it sought to take the Bible seriously but also because it was formed partly under the influence of the hermeneutical insights of the leaders.

The Grand Narrative of the AUCECB sprang from the biblical text. It is important, however, to distinguish between the Bible and the ECB system of using Bible-based narratives, though the ECB would see no difference. The hermeneutical process consisted in assimilating or absorbing the text of the Scriptures. Those involved in the process believed they had to reconstruct "the real facts" of the story of the past; to state "how it actually happened." In this they relied upon the Bible as *the* ultimately trustworthy and clear source of historical knowledge. A "historical truth" revealed in the Bible had the absolute authority of irrefutable reality which, to some extent, was more solid than reality revealed through the senses. The truth might be used for didactic purposes, in accordance with the AUCECB's educational aims, but it had great significance *per se*, in the same way as a personal biography has significance independent of any further implications. Such an attitude may be seen in a great number of *BV* articles retelling biblical stories without any systematic explanation or even application. Soviet Baptists were ready to listen, for example, to the stories of Israelite Kings hundreds of times without any special concern about any practical application of these stories.[27]

The hermeneutical task was directed toward incorporating a biblical text into the ECB's communal religious consciousness, into its spiritual experience. The aim of interpreters was not primarily to explain the meaning of the biblical text. That was taken to be "crystal clear". Instead, they tried to append to the text a system of associations, values, and characteristics that were known and accepted in the community in order to produce an "entire

[27] There was a popular series of sermons on Israelite kings preached by A. Karev in the beginning of the 1970s. Some records of these sermons can be found on http://www.ecbarchive.org .

image". Every detail in the process of interpretation contributed to building an integral picture of "life by the Scriptures".[28] Everything in this process, from the demeanour of a preacher-interpreter to the style and vocabulary of the interpretation, was of great importance. Biblical interpretation was not separated from the spiritual life of the community. Rather, it shaped that life. The Grand Narrative of the ECB, God's Word, standing as it did above criticism, was of enormous significance but was, perhaps paradoxically, less applicable in practice, since it was so all-encompassing. The vision was to build together all the biblical stories so as to construct the sacred grand narrative.[29] In a sense what was being done was circular. The biblical stories were used, but a further story was constructed by the preacher.

The Grand Narrative of the ECB was a complex construction formed not only around the biblical narrative but also closely associated with the narrative of personal conversion. It is noteworthy that early Russian evangelical and Baptist preachers, such as Jacob Delyakov or Ivan Ryaboshapka, used the narrative of conversion as the only message in their preaching.[30] The subsequent development of evangelical congregations was accompanied by the development of a grand narrative that had the tendency to absorb every part of the Bible. The process of creating a unifying narrative corpus clearly played an important role in the formation of solid evangelical organizations from the amorphous mass of Russian and Ukrainian sectarianism. In the Soviet period, and especially with the formation of the AUCECB, the narrative deduced from the Bible became the heart of inter-evangelical unity. Different congregations in the AUCECB might vary in respect of certain practices or doctrinal preferences, but they all recognized the Bible to be a true account of the events of sacred biblical history and they had a common vision of this history. So the Grand Narrative became a *lingua franca* in which ECB could communicate inside their congregations.

c. The process of building the Sacred Grand Narrative

Within the AUCECB, the Sacred Grand Narrative determined the cycle of the year. In the second issue of *BV*, Y. Zhidkov had an article under the title "Our holy days".[31] As the basic

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[28] An expression from a famous hymn by I. Prokhanov. The hymn was associated with the foundation of a Christian communal farm, "Bethany", in the 1920s. (See Shop-Mishich, M.P.,*Vifaniia* [Bethany], *Khrisitanin*, vol. 7 (1928), p.18).

[29] This formula virtually coincides with the definition of myth according to Losev.

[30] See A. Nagirnyak , 'Kratkiie biografii sluzhitelei' [Short biographies of ministers] (on CD 2 "History of Evangelical Movement, EAAA, 2002) and Y.I.Zhidkov, 'Kratkaia avtobiografiia' [Short autobiography], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1954), p. 22.

[31] Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Nashi prazdniki' [Our holidays], *BV*, vol. 2 (1946), p. 13.

text for his sermon he took 1 Cor.5:8, "Let us keep the feast".[32] The author reminded his readers that they were citizens of both the celestial fatherland and the earthly motherland,[33] and, hence, they should celebrate both state and Christian holidays. Zhidkov listed the dates that were to be celebrated in local ECB congregations. This list demonstrates a merging of biblical history presented in the Bible with contemporary history experienced by Soviet believers. It includes New Year, the Anniversary of Lenin's death (Day of commemoration of Lenin),[34] Day of international solidarity of industrial classes, two Victory Days (over Germany and Japan), Constitution Day, Christmas, Christ's Baptism, Candlemas Day (*Sreteniye*), Annunciation, Easter, Pentecost, Transformation, Unity Day (*Den' Yedinstva*), and Thanksgiving Day (*Den' Blagodareniya*).[35] Zhidkov exhorts churches and congregations to celebrate all these holidays but not to take a day off work if this was not prescribed by Soviet law.[36] Although this particular article was of a propagandistic character, the promotion of the idea of holy days for the Christian life was typical for Soviet evangelicals. Soon various holidays and anniversaries became a pretext for evangelical meetings, publications, and circular correspondence. For example, in remembering Christmas, people were to answer the question "Is He born in your heart?" and, thus *BV* could publish an evangelistic sermon, which otherwise would have been inconceivable.[37] Holy days were the embodiment of the biblical narrative in the daily life of those who read it.

Certain articles repeated in different forms the narratives associated with major events of the Church calendar. Therefore a comparative analysis of various interpretations can provide a better understanding of the development of the Grand Narrative. One episode from the Christmas narrative was often used, Lk. 2:6-7: "The time came for the baby to be born, and she [Mary] gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." This text was commented on several times in publications of the AUCECB. The most basic element in building the Grand Narrative was the reproduction of the biblical text. For example, in *BV* in 1969: "When they came to Bethlehem, there was no room in an inn for them and they were forced to look for haven in a sheep-fold. There Mary gave birth to her first-born son, wrapped him in cloth and

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[32] No account is taken of the passage's context.

[33] There is a hint of a reference to his article 'Khristianin i rodina' [The Christian and the motherland], *BV*, vol. 1 (1945, p. 6, discussed before.

[34] It is curious that Lenin's birthday is not in this list.

[35] Zhidkov, 'Nashi prazdniki' [Our holidays], pp. 14-19.

[36] Ibid., p. 19.

[37] P. Malin, 'Rozhden li on v tvoiei zhizni' [Is he born in your life?], *BV*, vol. 6 (1946), p. 18.

laid him down in a manger".[38] The only new detail that was not present in the original text was the sheep-fold, though this detail appears later in the account of the Christmas story by Luke. Such a retelling usually occurred in articles that were not directly focused on the retold text. Nevertheless, a great number of articles consisted entirely of a literal compilation of biblical texts. In his own preaching, the chief editor of *BV*, Kulikov, having read an introductory text and before starting to preach, used to announce from the pulpit: "I have completed the most important task. What I am going to add to the Bible has secondary significance."[39]

A more elaborate interpretation could include poetic evaluation of the information in the biblical text. For example, the sheep-fold was usually characterized as poor and modest. At the same time, the baby was described as the "glorious God". Very often the authors pointed to the contrast between the greatness of the child and misery of the background of the event.[40] A standard way to colour the text consisted in comparing the actual situation in the text with another possible situation that might seem more appropriate. For example, interpreters proposed that better places for Jesus' birth would have been a palace,[41] or, at least, a kindergarten. In Russian the word "manger" (*yasli*) normally means a kindergarten for children under three years old.[42]

Although the main desire in preaching and in articles in *BV* was to reproduce the biblical narrative, interpretation usually involved many details not present in the initial text. Interpreters did not normally talk about the origin of these details, some of which gained an authority almost on the level of the original text. Indeed, interpreters used them as if they were present in the text. For example, one of the most frequent details included in the account of the Christmas events was the fact that Jesus was placed on a heap of straw. The first time this detail appeared was in an anonymous article "He will be named Emmanuel".[43] It is

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[38] K.K. (Kuznetsov), 'Istoriia Novogo Zaveta' [History of the New Testament], *BV*, vol. 1 (1969), p.48

[39] Interview with Vitalii Kulikov, 20 November, 2006

[40] *Rozhdestvenskoe poslanie vsem tserkvam evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* [Christmas message to all churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR], *BV*, vol. 6 (1971), p. 5.

[41] Ibid.

[42] G.A.K., *Rozhdestvenskaia pesnia na Vifleemskikh poliakh* [Christmas song on Bethlehem fields], *BV*6(1987):7. The word is *iasli* , meaning: 1. kindergarten, 2. childish. See *Russkii assotsiativnyi slovar'* [Russian associative dictionary] (Moscow, AST, 2002), p. 976.

[43] 'I narekut emu imia Emmanuil' [He will be named Emmanuel], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 22. The word 'sermon' was the only note to this article. Apparently it was an article written by one of the local pastors who was not prepared to announce his name in public. The content of the article shows that it was a contemporary

interesting that in this article the author notes that this detail appears from "tradition". It seems that the preacher read about it in a description of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. After this article, the bed of straw became a very frequent element in the Christmas story as told in *BV*. At least a quarter of all Christmas articles written later mention this detail. Not only so, but the "straw" received a certain significance in later AUCECB writings. It designated the beginning of Jesus' sufferings: "Mary gave birth to Jesus in a dirty sheep-fold and placed him on to thorny straw";[44] "He was born as the poorest among paupers and he was laid down on to the rude straw".[45] The interpretation of this detail kept developing. In 1969 A. Karev proposed that the straw in the manger was wheat straw and had a symbolic significance because of the embodiment of Jesus as the "bread of life".[46] This interpretation became standard.[47]

Articles in *BV* suggested many other details concerning the scene of Jesus' birth: he was born in a cave, one Christmas message stated;[48] the cave had a special fence, according to one *BV* article;[49] the room, in a piece by Mitskevich, was lit by a small candle;[50] or the baby was crying.[51] Some of these details seem to have been inspired by visits of Union officials to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.[52] They also drew from graphic depictions of the Christmas event, for example the painting by Rembrandt of the "Holy family".[53] Personal impressions from the lifestyle of people in the southern republics of the Soviet Union were also woven into the narrative.[54] In other words, preachers-interpreters

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preacher. After the sermon, the editorial board placed a depiction of the church building in Leninakan (Armenia), so perhaps the author was a Russian-speaking preacher in exile.

[44] A.V. Karev, 'Mat' Iisusa u kresta Golgofy' [Mother of Jesus at Calvary's cross], *BV*, vol. 3 (1967), p. 21 (from 'Golgotha' cycle).

[45] *Rozhdestvenskoe poslanie vsem tserkvam evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* [Christmas message to all churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR], *BV*, vol. 6 (1970), p. 5.

[46] A.V. Karev, 'Luchi Vifleiema' [Rays of Bethlehem], *BV*, vol. 6 (1969), p. 29.

[47] *Rozhdestvenskoe poslanie vsem tserkvam evangel'skikh khristian-baptistov v SSSR* [Christmas message to all churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR], p. 5.

[48] Ibid.

[49] E.M., 'Evangeliie ot Luki' [Gospel of Luke], *BV*, vol. 3 (1962), p. 48.

[50] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Slava v vyshnikh Bogu, i na zemle mir, v chelovekakh blagovolenie' [Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased], *BV*, vol. 1 (1955), p. 17.

[51] I.R., 'Imia Emu — Chudnyi' [His name is wonderful], p. 9.

[52] A.M. Bichkov, 'Poseshchenie zemli, gde zhil Iisus Khristos' [Visit to the land where Christ was born], *BV*, vol. 6 (1987), p. 28.

[53] I.R., 'Imia Emu — Chudnyi' [His name is wonderful], pp. 9-10.

[54] E.M., 'Evangeliie ot Luki' [Gospel of Luke], *BV*, vol. 3 (1962), p. 48, p. 50.

used any accessible sources to create a full-bodied picture of biblical events in order to make them as compatible as possible with the common vision of the world in the ECB community.

The next step in interpretation was the incorporation of a given passage into the general picture of the Grand Narrative. This step implied linking the story to other passages of the Scriptures and to general doctrinal paradigms. The most frequent procedure here was a short reference to a similar passage from the Scriptures. This is in line with the standard expository method of comparing Scripture with Scripture, but ECB writers did not tend to refer to the use of any method. After a description of the Christmas scene, a commentator might add: "Truly, he came to the world 'taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men'" (Phil. 2:7).[55] Often comments linked texts with well-known Christian beliefs. Thus, Christmas was presented as an evidence of God's love for humanity.[56] Less often, the authors added a certain explanation of the significance of a given passage for a general historical or doctrinal scheme: for example, Christmas signified the end of the Old Testament worship order because Jesus had appeared as a perfect offering for God, replacing the system of offerings in the Temple.[57]

Interpretation might include certain exhortations for the readers, although exhortation and application were not obligatory elements of interpretation. Preachers did not try to find possible moral or ethical consequences of biblical narratives if they were not defined explicitly in the text. Moreover, according to the common opinion of preachers of that time, too much exhortation would detract from contemplation of God's Word. According to V.Kulikov, when the committee of the AUCECB was editing a Russian translation of *The Daily Study Bible* by William Barclay,[58] its members were irritated by the great number of illustrative stories he included. In their opinion, Barclay was too concerned about practical application instead of focusing on quiet listening to God's truths. As result, they significantly abridged the text of his commentaries.[59] When an exhortation took place in *BV*, in the great majority of cases it consisted in recalling certain associations in connection with a passage of the Scriptures. These thoughts had the character of "daily wisdom" and only needed to be mentioned since everybody supposedly already knew them. For example, A. Karev, in talking about the story of Christmas, says that "every new born baby is an enigma: who will he or

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[55] I.R., 'Imia Emu — Chudnyi' [His name is wonderful], pp. 9-10.

[56] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Slava v vyshnikh Bogu, i na zemle mir, v chelovekakh blagovolenie' [Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased], *BV*, vol. 1 (1955), pp.17-18.

[57] Ibid.

[58] This series was published in the USA by Herald Press in 1987.

[59] Interview with Vitalii Kulikov, 20 November, 2006

she be when they grow up?"[60] The formulation of this thought is not complete, since Karev assumes that every believer will see the implications - notably the responsibility of parents for nurturing their children. In other exhortations readers might be called to join the imaginary crowd of worshippers who in their thoughts gathered around the manger of the new-born Jesus.[61]

Yakov Tsunenko, writing in *BV* in 1948, provides an example of someone delivering an exhortation that demonstrates how a given biblical text might be included in the larger picture of the Sacred Grand Narrative. Christians, in his interpretation, were associated with those people who refused to allow the holy family to have a room in an inn. Starting from this point, the interpreter creates a picturesque image of Jesus who

> goes wearing the wretched clothes of earthly flesh from house to house, from heart to heart and begs: let me in! let me in! let me in! His tears are continually pouring[62] from his divine eyes because these believers are pitiful, wretched, naked and blind. Knocking loudly he proposes they take his gold of patience, humility and meekness, which had gone through the fire of the Gethsemane fight and experienced the flame of Calvary torments… But the spirit of the 'golden middle way' [that is, lack of enthusiasm, compromise – A.P.], neither hot, nor cold, has blinded their eyes, closed their ears, sealed their hearts... Who will hear my voice and open the door?, – he asks and the answers are "no room", "no room", "no room". This sorrowful Jesus is standing in front of their houses; he is standing and crying, experiencing burning sorrow and pain, because they do not know what serves for their peace.[63]

This passage, in its style and content, combines almost all the elements in the interpretational practice of the ECB. It includes the striving for uncompromising holiness and the praise of suffering, the belief in the power of words to achieve change, the association of texts with other texts (the Gospels with Revelation chapter 3), and the exceptional position of interpreters who bring the story to life in imaginative ways - as in this case the author seems to depicts Holman Hunt's famous picture of Christ knocking at the door.

Although it was the spiritual meaning of the text that was considered primary, nevertheless AUCECB interpreters admitted the presence of certain "difficulties" in reading the Bible. Interpreters usually considered metaphorical expressions as needing special explanation. Such expressions were taken very seriously as pointing to extraordinary spiritual reality, so interpreters strove to find special meanings behind them, often taking them

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[60] A.V.Karev, 'Mysli v sviazi s prazdnikom Rozhdestva Khristova' [Thoughts about Christmas], *BV*, vol. 6 (1972), p. 27.

[61] Mitskevich, 'Slava v vyshnikh Bogu, i na zemle mir, v chelovekakh blagovolenie' [Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased], pp. 17-18.

[62] lit. 'pouring out and pouring out'.

[63] N. Tsunenko, 'Khristos v iasliakh' [Christ in the manger], *BV*, vol. 6 (1948), p. 20.

completely out of their context. Among such special expressions were, for example, "sins against the Holy Spirit",[64] and "birth from water and spirit".[65] Sometimes these texts might even provoke theological conflicts.[66] But in general the "hard places of the Bible", as they were sometimes viewed,[67] became the sources of new concepts and ideas in the ECB.

It is important to note the difference between the process of building the Sacred Narrative and biblical interpretation in the common meaning of this term. Usually interpretation of the Bible implies that interpreters clarify what initially is not clear for most readers or prevent possible misunderstandings of texts. The ECB writers postulated that the Bible was clear and could generally be understood without any additional comments. For example, it was believed that no reader would find any difficulty in understanding the Christmas story. But difficulties were present. For example, most readers of the Gospels within the AUCECB did not know any other meaning of the word "manger" in Russian other than its contemporary meaning, a kindergarten. The only *BV* author who tried to explain this unclear idiom made a mistake since he claimed that a "manger" is a sort of barn.[68] ECB interpreters did not aim to explain texts, whether difficult or otherwise, but instead painted them, and placed them into the general picture of their spiritual world. Thus I. Kargel, the most mystical author among Russian evangelicals, wrote: "Let us not be keen on … mysteries and difficult places of the Bible, but, instead, let us know Jesus and his love more deeply".[69]

d. Stories of saints

Although the whole Bible was accepted as fully authoritative for the ECB community, not all the narratives in the Bible had equal value in the eyes of interpreters. During the Soviet period the number of *BV* articles based on any of the texts from the first eleven chapters of

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[64] E.g. A.I. Mitskevich, 'Grekhi protiv Dukha Sviatogo' [Sins against the Spirit], *BV*, vol. 6 (1969), p. 49.

[65] A.V. Karev, 'Osnovnye nachala khristianskoi zhizni' [Basic foundations of the Christian life], *BV*, vol. 4 (1962), p. 25.

[66] The most prominent example of disagreement in interpretation which led to arguments between Russian evangelicals was the dissent between Baptists and Pentecostals over the term 'baptism with the Holy Spirit'.

[67] The meaning of this term for the ECB can be seen in the article by Somov, V. S., 'Mesta Biblii, trebuiushchie ob"iasneniia' [The places in the Bible that demand explanations], *BV*, vol. 4 (1963), p. 66.

[68] E.M., 'Evangeliie ot Luki' [Gospel of Luke], *BV*, vol. 3 (1962), p. 48

[69] I. Kargel, 'Svet iz teni budushchikh blag' [Light from the shadows of future blessings] (St. Petersburg: Maksfeld, 1908), p. 383.

the Bible was surprisingly small.[70] Seemingly one of the reasons for this was the inner censorship of authors who understood that any speculation on the pre-historical narratives could have been interpreted by the authorities as an attempt to confront "Soviet science". At the same time, a comparison with the underground publications of the CCECB, who also paid little attention to such science or to censorship, confirms that these narratives were not attractive to most Soviet Baptist preachers. Usually references to narratives of the primordial prologue were mentioned in connection with corresponding New Testament quotations.[71] Texts from the last book of the Bible, Revelation, were also rarely used. The exception is in propagandistic *BV* articles. For example, Cain and Abel were used in the anti-war rhetoric of *BV*.[72] The AUCECB also considered that the picture of the eschatological Antichrist who was to come was proof from the Bible that the USSR was not the unholy kingdom of Satan, as was alleged by some.[73]

For the proper functioning of a biblical narrative in ECB usage, it also seems that a human personage had to be available in the plot. There were several characters in the Bible whose stories dominated the work of ECB writers. The most popular biblical heroes, or "saints", were Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Peter and Paul. Women were not included as examples. Jesus was, naturally, the absolute standard. Approximately three quarters of all devotional texts of the AUCECB were expositions of aspects of the story of Jesus. At the same time, Jesus was not an exceptional figure in the spiritual articles. There were a number of articles that did not even mention Jesus. Also in many articles built around the Gospel narrative, Jesus himself did not play a central role. Meanwhile a human personage who appeared in touch with Jesus attracted all the attention of the authors.[74] The most popular

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[70] Such articles started to appear on the pages of *BV* after *Perestroika*, e.g. Kanatush, V.Ia., 'Vera Avelia' [The faith of Abel], *BV*, vol. 6 (1990), p. 15.

[71] For example, Noah was usually mentioned in the context of Heb. 11.

[72] e.g. Y.I. Zhidkov, 'Ne vooruzhenie, a razoruzhenie!' [No armament, but disarmament], *BV*, 5-6 (1961), pp. 19-20.

[73] 'Redaktoru zhurnala Shlanets' pravdi bratu L.Zhabko-Potapovichu' [Letter to L. Zhabko-Potapovich, the editor of the journal Shlanets' pravdi], *BV*, vol.2 (1969), p.70 (This was a journal of Ukrainian emigrants in the USA).

[74] E.g. V.S. Mesheriakov, 'Iisus v dome Zakkheia'[Jesus in the house of Zacchaeus], *BV*, vol. 4 (1962), p. 74. In this version of the story of Zacchaeus Jesus plays a minimal role. The author involves also 'slanderers who followed Jesus', though they are not mentioned in the biblical narrative.

prophets were the story-like books of Daniel and Jeremiah. The Major Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah were the least popular because their books contained few extensive narrative parts.[75]

It is evident that being a source of a great number of edifying stories, the Old Testament played no less an important role in the grand narrative of the ECB than the New Testament did. But parts of the Old Testament received little attention. For example, Soviet Baptist interpreters never used in their works the story of the tower of Babylon. This story was mentioned only in reference materials,[76] or occasionally in sermons by foreigners,[77] but it could have served as a perfect illustration of the sinfulness of human nature and the need for repentance. Why, then, was it not used in sermons or articles? A plausible reason was that it had no central individual human character, so *BV* authors could not use this story as instruction for their readers. The readers could find in the story no character with whom to identify themselves. It is necessary to note that in ECB material God was never considered as the central actor in any biblical story.

The way *BV* dealt with the story of Jonah is significant. He is one of the most controversial prophets of the Old Testament. Interestingly, in *BV* Jonah is seldom remembered in connection with Jesus' prophecy about his own death and resurrection.[78] The article in 1955 by Vera Shcheglova, "Jonah",[79] presented a typical scheme of interpretation. It is obvious that Jonah, a prophet, could not be criticized by the female author of the article. Actually in her interpretation all the characters are highly positive. Jonah may err, but unwillingly and innocently. However, he does make mistakes:

> Since God's assignment was difficult and dangerous the heart of Jonah became sad… He decided to 'flee from the face of God'… Now he could sigh with relief and feel free from God's commandment. But he was mistaken.[80]

At the same time, even in his mistake the hero continues to be a model saint. His "selflessness raises in us irresistible respect toward the prophet".[81] The second mistake of the

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[75] Isaiah is the most frequent name to appear among all prophets but he was usually remembered in the context of his prophecies being fulfilled in the life of Jesus (approximately 80% of all cases).

[76] 'Osnovniie temy Biblii' [The basic themes of the Bible], *BV*, vol. 1 (1959), pp. 34, 46.

[77] For example, it was mentioned in the book *Approaching hoofbeats* by Billy Graham, parts of which were published in 1990 in Russian (Billy Graham, 'Chetyre vsadnika apokalipsisa' [Four horsemen of the Apocalypse], *BV*, vol. 6 (1990), p. 26).

[78] Usually this prophecy is mentioned in articles by foreign authors, e.g. Billy Graham, 'O prikhode na zemliu Khrista' [About Christ's coming to the earth], *BV*, vol. 6 (1983), p. 4, p. 9.

[79] Shcheglova, 'Iona', p. 30.

[80] Ibid., p. 31.

[81] Ibid.

prophet consists in his anxiety that his ministry might be evaluated in inappropriate ways: "People might think that he spoke not from God but from himself".[82] But, of course, all his fears were in vain, a result of the "remnants of selfishness".[83] In the interpretation of Shcheglova, the story of Jonah has no negative aspects. The prophet's character can cause him to take a false step, but any mistake eventually has such positive consequences that it can be accepted without criticism. The characters, be they sailors or passengers of the ship, citizens of Nineveh or Jonah himself, are all making spiritual progress. All of their steps are assessed and explained in this article from the perspective of the general direction of their spiritual growth. The hero plays a leading role in demonstrating a paradigm of deep spirituality. His double mistake and improvement correspond to the double repentance of those who surround him.

As is to be expected, the narratives which fascinated ECB interpreters were related to their main concerns: sin, conversion, and personal and communal holiness. The most popular biblical narratives were those narratives that told "stories of leaders" who apparently had to play an important role in nurturing *sluzhiteli* - ministers. The ECB *sluzhiteli* could easily associate themselves with the characters of those stories, so preachers encountered no problems in propagating their ideas through retelling biographies of their biblical "colleagues". In order to understand the importance of the "stories of the leaders" in the hermeneutical writings of the AUCECB it is crucial to note the exceptional role of the "personal example" in the mentality of the Soviet people. From the beginning of Soviet power in Russia, the Soviet social consciousness was leader-orientated. Imitating a hero was central in fostering citizens of this new society. These model members of the Communist society were, for example, top leaders of the CPSU, like Lenin or Stalin, heroes of WWII (e.g. Alexander Matrosov,[84] or Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya[85]), or individuals who demonstrated outstanding results in their work (e.g. Alexey Stakhanov[86]). Creation of an image of a perfect Communist hero was the primary goal of the movement of Social Realism

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] See p. 190 of this thesis.

[85] Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was a young girl, a CYL member, tortured by the Nazis during World War II for subversive activities. See M. Bessler, *Red Youth: Young Heroes of the Great Patriotic War*, v.1 (Erythrós Press and Media, 2009). Her image was used in Communist propaganda for fostering patriotism.

[86] Stakhanov was the famous miner whose high industrial achievements in 1935were used to demonstrate the advantages of socialism over capitalism. See 'Heroes of Labor', in *Time Magazine*, December 16, 1935, pp. 26-27.

in official Soviet literature.[87] The living examples had a much greater impact on popular opinion than any theoretical speculations.

The same rhetorical strategy can be observed in publications of the AUCECB. Preachers did not merely present their ideas in the form of an abstract concept. Instead, they worked on the image of an ideal believer, an ideal "saint", who could embody their values and illustrate their perception of the world. The paradigm of spiritual growth consisted in the contemplation of the models presented in the expositions of the lives of the saints. Typically ECB sermons were accompanied by appeals to active perception of the story. In a similar way, *BV* authors used verbs connected with vision to attract the attention of their readers or listeners: "May the Apostle Paul always stand before our sight…";[88] "Direct your eyes toward Jesus Christ";[89] "Let us have a glance at the disciples of Jesus."[90] In general, idioms carrying the idea of vision - "look", "see", "sight", "appearance", – are statistically the most frequent among action words. The visual character of the perception of the world may be noted even in the titles of the articles: "All eyes were directed to him"; "We want to see Jesus"; "They will look at the Crucified"[91]. The exceptional role of vision in perceiving the world can be seen in narratives where typically visual contact preceded any dialogues. For example, Kulikov, the chief editor of *BV*, who used visual idioms more often than other authors, describes the meeting of Peter and John with the lame man (Act. 3:1-10) in this way:

> The Apostles noticed the pleading stare of the beggar and did not disappoint him… Having seen the cripple Apostle Peter looked at him attentively. The whole misery of this person was exposed before his sight… All this misery was expressed in the stare of the poor one at them. So looking attentively at him Peter said: 'Look at us'.[92]

Since visual perception had the greatest importance in building relations between the hero and others, his outward appearance played an important role in the presentation. In a great many cases of such expositions, authors tried to depict the hero's image. Although

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[87] Socialist Realism was the official trend in art and literature from the beginning of the 1930s. Its principles, personally approved by Stalin, included concrete descriptions, focusing on the interests of the Communist Party (*partiinost'*), and interest in folk life (*narodnost'*) (*Bolshaia Sovietskaia Entsiklopediia* [Big Soviet Encyclopedia] (1st ed., Moscow: Sovietskaia Entsiklopediia, 1926), v. 52, p. 239.

[88] A.V. Karev, 'Podrazhaite mne, kak ia Khristu' [Be imitators of me as I am an imitator of Christ], *BV*, vol. 5 (1979), p. 15.

[89] I.M. Sergey, 'Terpeniem vashim spasaite dushi vashi' [Save your souls with your patience], *BV*, vol. 4 (1993), p. 17.

[90] Y.I.Zh., 'Prorocheskie slova pervosviashchennika Kaiafy o Khriste' [Prophetic words of Caiaphas about Jesus], *BV*, vol. 2 (1958), p. 12.

[91] Sermons from the book by Kulikov, *Siianie slavy* [Shining of the glory]).

[92] V.G. Kulikov, *Vzgliani na nas* [Look at us], *BV*, vol. 4 (1990), p. 3.

Soviet Baptists were fervent opponents of Russian Orthodox icons, they could not resist the temptation to create verbal icons. A clear example of such an icon can be observed in the article by V. Kulikov "All eyes were directed to him":

> Although he [Jesus] was dressed like many rabbis of his time he differed from them all. His compassionate loving eyes were looking in a special way. It is said that Christ was not seen laughing, but on the contrary, sorrow and compassion left a mark on his appearance. This unusual appearance attracted people… He radiated invisible power which left an effect in the hearts of people and conquered them in inexplicable ways. People longed to see him and to hear his word.[93]

The figure of a sad hero with a face expressing his deep spiritual experience is not limited only to Jesus. Almost the same image is presented in the depiction of Jacob by A. Karev:

> An elder more than a hundred years old is before us. He is still strong as an oak but he is lame after that night when he fought with God… His soul is not as beautiful as the soul of Abraham. There is much negativity in him… But what is wonderful about him is his fight with his 'old Adam'… But let us look more attentively at the face of Jacob. Although he is a hundred years old, some of his wrinkles are premature. We can read sorrow in his eyes. The wrinkles and the sorrow speak about much suffering in his life, about thousands of storms! But these storms contributed to the spiritual growth of Jacob… In his youth he was beautiful outwardly but he had little inner beauty. Conversely, in his old years he is a charming old man but this charm is in his splendid soul.[94]

In general, the sorrowful mood was considered as the most pious and this attitude was also expected from friends of the hero. For example, in Kulikov's article about David there is a typical description of a good friend: "When Jonathan warned David about Saul's conspiracy against him, it is said that they kissed each other and cried together. But David cried more intensely."[95] The superiority of David is shown here through the deeper immersion of the hero into grief. The visual dimension in depictions of heroes was often opposed to the verbal, in the sense that words spoken were considered as secondary compared to simple silent presence: "The soundlessness, the silence of Christ speaks louder than the loudest words."[96] Actually the silence stresses the significance and power of

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[93] Kulikov, *Siianie slavy* [The shining of the glory], p.14.

[94] A.V. Karev, 'Uroki dlia veruiushchikh iz zhizni Iosifa' [Lessons for believers from the life of Joseph], *BV*, vol. 2 (1956), p. 3.

[95] V.G. Kulikov, 'David', *BV*, vol. 1 (1968), p. 39.

[96] A.V. Karev, 'Kartiny neba po Knige Otkroveniia Ioanna' [Pictures of the heavens according to the book of Revelation], *BV*, vol. 5 (1980), p. 9.

subsequent words and actions: "Christ may be silent … but on his day and at his hour he will reply in such a way that our hearts will be filled with the loudest praises.[97]

Also, some authors paid exaggerated attention to even insignificant material objects appearing in biblical texts. With great scrupulosity, authors explain geographical, botanical, zoological or ethnographical details in the stories. This attitude could reflect the religious tradition of Orthodoxy where veneration of icons has exceptional importance. In addition, the interest in visual images explains the interest in reference materials and the desire to publish these in *BV* (which was discussed in chapter 6). Readers of the periodical needed to have a clear visual image of the story event in order to understand it.

In ECB minds the initial visual presentation of the hero is an important introduction to the spoken element. The audience should first be convinced of the dignity of the speaker, and as soon as they receive the needed testimonies they are expected to accept all the words spoken unconditionally. Analyzing the presentation of heroes, especially the visual aspect, it is significant that the authors/artists in *BV* do not have the colour grey on their palette: only black or white. Any character has to be evaluated: good or bad, true or false, right or wrong. The idea of binary opposition defined the social setting of any central hero. People around him were either friends or foes. Friends formed the wider category of secondary characters. At the same time, this category is more diverse. It includes a broad range of different types of people from close disciples, in the case of Jesus, to sympathetic passers-by. In some articles the focus shifted from the main hero to his companions, who were praised no less than the hero himself.[98] Foes were less important for the narrators. Usually they were presented as a faceless hostile crowd. The words "foe" or "enemy" in the singular are applied usually to the devil, not to humans. Adversaries are addressed as "they" even if their names were known: "Enemies of the new-born king of Judah did not allow him to rest in the vicinity of Bethlehem."[99]

It is illuminating to investigate the emotional spectrum of the characters in the biblical narratives. The ideal psychological type presented in the articles in *BV* is a good illustration of the image of the model saint. This type is related to the Orthodox evaluation of deep spirituality. There is a dispassionate outlook, detachment from this world, and melancholic

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[97] A.V. Karev, 'Chto govorit prorok Isaiia o Khriste' [What does the prophet Isaiah say about Christ?], *BV*, vol. 4 (1972), p.29

[98] E.g. A.V. Karev, 'Obraz Khrista v Novom Zavete' [Image of Christ in the New Testament], *BV*, vol.1 (1967), p. 18.

[99] T. Nikolai, 'Muzh skorbei' [Man of sorrows], *BV*, vol. 2 (1949), p. 37.

contemplation of reality.[100] Usually emotions are the privilege of people around the hero, while he himself remains almost completely calm. If the hero shows some feelings, these are usually related in some way to grief or sorrow: in the overwhelming number of cases in which the emotions of Jesus are dealt with in *BV* the verb "to grieve" is attributed to Jesus. Thus Jesus grieved, mourned, wept, and moaned. At the same time, I have not found cases in *BV* where Jesus is described as happy, smiling, or laughing. Thus a typical description of the "human nature" of Jesus is given in the article by A. Mitskevich, in "Jesus Christ":[101] "Like other people the Saviour experienced hunger, thirst, fell asleep because of weariness, mourned about people, and wept. He needed human compassion."[102]

V. Kulikov, in his talks to students of the AUCECB Bible Correspondence Courses, often talked about his concept of the "verbal icon".[103] Unfortunately he never formulated this concept in more detail in written form, partly because it remained at an intuitive level. The essence of this concept seems to have consisted in presenting the Bible in such a way that it could be contemplated as a painted icon. An interpreter was compared to an artist who creates his work not on a material canvas but on the canvas of human imagination. Worshipping before such a verbal icon would purify and nourish the souls of those who were called to absolute sanctity. At the same time, the Sacred Grand Narrative was directed towards a verbal depiction of the saints. Ideally, the visual and the verbal complemented each other. Those figures of biblical saints taught the ideals of personal holiness so appreciated by the ECB in a clearer way than any straightforward doctrinal statement could do. The Grand Sacred Narrative was built around the archytypical character of a "Perfect Saint".

e. Forms of expressions of the Sacred Grand Narrative

There were two genres used in the great majority of all the devotional articles in *BV*. First, there were articles that were formed around an exposition of biblical episodes. Sometimes they belonged to a long series of commentaries on the books of the Bible, while sometimes they were independent. Secondly, there were thematic devotional articles, sometimes of a rather scholastic character, discussing issues related to the evangelical concepts of personal conversion and sanctification. Exactly the same division can be found in the book to which

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[100] This was typical for Russian religious culture. Toporov described such an archetypal saint using the figure of Pheodosii Pechorskii: V.N. Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in the Russian spiritual culture] (Moscow: Shk. «Iazyki rus. kul'tury», 1995-1998), pp. 658-667.

[101] A.I. Mitskevich, 'Iisus Khristos' [Jesus Christ], *BV*, vol. 2 (1976), p. 41.

[102] Ibid., p. 44.

[103] I was a student of the BCC (renamed by that time the Bible Correspondence Institute) in 1992-1994.

this thesis has referred many times: the manual of the BCC, *Ekzegetika,* by Karev, Mitskevich and Popov. In chapter 4 of the thesis I discussed some theoretical insights expressed in that book. But the theoretical chapters were added in later editions of the book. Initially it consisted of a series of sermons by A. Karev. These sermons were written long before the BCC was established and were apparently used during sessions in Prokhanov's Leningrad Bible School where Karev taught in the 1920s.[104] So this text expressed the hermeneutical insights of the Evangelical Christians of that period, although it was quite dissimilar to the usual manuals on hermeneutics where interpretative principles are expressed in analytical ways.

Ekzegetika consisted of two parts: the first one contained an exposition of the Gospel of John and the second was devoted to the letter of James. This division corresponds to the two forms of expression of the sacred narratives of saints in the articles published by the ECB: *expositional* and *topical*. In both forms interpreters created extended biblical stories, adding to the biblical texts their details, evaluations and conclusions. But the arrangement of the narrative materials was different in the different forms. In expositional articles the text of the Bible had the leading role, stimulating a stream of associations, thoughts and comments which made up the Grand Sacred Narrative. For example, in *Ekzegetika* the commentaries on John represented the expository form of exegesis. In this part Karev explored the events of the gospel story consecutively and added his remarks.

In topical articles in *BV* and elsewhere certain statements about "spiritual truths" began the discourse and led on to compilations of linked narratives. It is not that topical texts never came from initial biblical passages. The commentaries on James are constructed through using verses from the Bible plus subsequent commentaries. But the interpreted texts were not of narrative character. They did not describe events and could not be visualized. So the commentators had to introduce narratives from other parts of the Scriptures to make the passage comprehensible for the readers. It is important to analyse both forms in more detail.

1. Expositional form of Bible presentation

One of the most frequent types within the expositional form of hermeneutics was the category of "biblical biography", which consisted of a description of the lives of certain biblical persons. Very often authors chose as objects of their reflection groups of figures such as the

[104] I could not find direct evidences of this fact. But the book by Kargel 'Light from shadows of future blessings' (I.V.Kargel, *Svet iz teni budushchikh blag* (St. Petersburg: Maksfeld, 1908) was written in the same style and was definitely used in that courses. So it proves that the teaching style during the courses was exactly the same as Karev used in BCC.

patriarchs,[105] the judges, [106] the prophets, [107] the Apostles, [108] and other heroes of the Gospels.[109] Articles of this kind presented life stories and then deduced certain moral lessons from the actions of the personages. The writers usually omitted any historical or linguistic analysis of the biblical texts. Thus stylistically such articles did not differ from the biographies of non-biblical historical figures. Close to "biblical biography" was the genre of "description of a geographical object".[110]

A large percentage of expository articles consisted of commentaries on certain books of the Bible or on their parts if the whole book was not covered. The commentaries written for *BV* covered almost all the New Testament and significant parts of the Old Testament. Most of them were constructed as classical verse-by-verse explanatory expositions. Shorter articles were written as introductions to biblical books and they dealt only with their general content. Usually the exposition consisted of retelling the biblical stories. As a rule, the reflections on the texts embraced life examples and pious exhortations.

Expository articles on the Gospel of John in *Ekzegetika* by Karev are typical of the expositional type of biblical presentation. In general they followed the scheme of the building up of the Grand Narrative presented before. The nature of his exegesis comes through in the fact that the text of the Bible is often not taken into account at all. The author does not

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[105] S. Shchepetov, 'Avraam' [Abraham], *BV*, vol. 1 (1956), p. 53; S. Shchepetov, 'Isaak' [Isaac], *BV*, vol. 2 (1956), p. 21; V.M., 'Iakov' [Jacob], *BV*, vol. 1 (1953), p. 53; V. Shcheglova, 'Lot' [Lot], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1958), p. 64; V. Shcheglova, 'Avraam' [Abraham], *BV*, vol. 1 (1960), p. 56.

[106] V.M., 'Gedeon' [Gideon], *BV*, vol. 1 (1954), p. 37; A.V. Karev, 'Uroki dla veruiuschikh iz zhizni propoka Samuila' [Lessons for believers from the life of the prophet Samuel], *BV*, vol. 1 (1955), p. 23; 'Iisus Navin' [Joshua], *BV*, vol. 3 (1963), p. 27, *BV*, vol. 4 (1963), p. 28.

[107] M. Orlov, 'Vernost' proroka Daniila' [Faithfulness of the prophet Daniel], *BV*, vol. 1 (1954), p. 4; V. Shcheglova, 'Ieremiia' [Jeremiah], *BV*, vol. 5-6 (1954), p. 72, 'Iona' [Jonah], *BV*, vol. 2 (1955), p. 30, 'Daniil' [Daniel], *BV*, vol. 4 (1957), p. 44; A.V.Karev, 'Uroki dla veruiuschikh iz zhizni propoka Moiseia' [Lessons for believers from the life of the prophet Samuel], *BV*, vol. 5 (1956), p. 8

[108] N.P. Konopl'ev, 'Apostol Petr' [The Apostle Peter], *BV*, vol. 4 (1963), p. 18; G.A.K., 'Apostol Andrei' [The Apostle Andrew], *BV*, vol. 3 (1965), p. 50; A.V. Karev, 'Apostol Foma' [The Apostle Thomas], *BV*, vol. 4 (1965), p. 23; K.V. Somov, 'Pervyie deiateli khristianstva – apostoly' [Apostles the first actors of Christianity], *BV*, vol. 6 (1965), p. 56; M.O. Freiman, 'Apostol Petr' [The Apostle Peter], *BV*, vol. 3 (1967), p. 47.

[109] V. Shcheglova, 'Simeon' [Simeon], *BV*, vol. 1 (1957), p. 11; R.K., 'Mater' Iisusa, Deva Maria' [The Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus], *BV*, vol. 1 (1960), p. 22; 'Lichnosti Novogo Zaveta' [Persons of the New Testament], *BV*, vol. 1 (1962), p. 50.

[110] E.g. I.S. Prokhanov, 'Vosem' dolin (iz bibleiskoi geographii)' [Eight valleys (from biblical geography], *BV*, vol. 3 (1945), p. 39.

interpret the text but retells the story of Jesus' life. Excerpts from John's gospel triggered the stream of the story but did not really order it. For example, the "comments" on the first chapter of John to a great extent consist of retelling a picturesque story of John the Baptist from his childhood to death which included his life with his parents, his thoughts in the wilderness, different traits of his character, and his missionary achievements.[111] John the Baptist, as presented in Karev's comments on John ch.1, is the fairly standard model saint expected by the readers, though the biblical text itself plays very little role in forming this figure. The same is true about the content of every chapter of the manual.

2. Topical form of Bible presentation

To complicate matters for ECB authors, the Bible does not consist of only narrative parts. Although non-narrative texts were not very popular in *BV* articles, it was impossible to ignore them all. Some of the texts dealt with, especially the epistles of the New Testament, were really significant for the ECB. The structure of the non-narrative based articles in *BV* needed to be different from the narrative based articles. The approach was defined not by the biblical text itself but by certain ideas inspired by it and rooted in the personal spiritual experiences of the authors. This type of hermeneutics was represented in numerous comments on epistles, prophecies and poetical books.[112] A certain number of expository articles dealt directly with issues of spiritual life. Most of these articles reflected spiritual experience, including conversion and sanctification. There also existed a certain group of works written in the tradition of dispensational theology.[113] Often they had the character of scholarly meditations on "aspects of salvation",[114] "stages of sanctification",[115] "periods in the history of salvation",[116] and other issues of that nature.

Bearing in mind the need to think about the exegesis of non-narrative texts, Karev proposed sermons on James as a model for a topical form of presenting the Bible. Although the presence of the Grand Narrative is less apparent in these articles, it nevertheless constitutes the essence of their hermeneutical form. The common scheme here is that the

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[111] A. Karev, A. Mitskevich, V. Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis] (Moscow: VSEKhB), pp. 41-49.

[112] Such articles in *BV* were very numerous. An example is L.M., 'Vtoroie puteshestviie Apostola Pavla' [The second journey of the Apostle Paul], *BV*, vol. 3 (1948), p. 26, which contains nothing but a retelling of the story from Acts.

[113] Dispensationalism became popular in Russia mostly because of the activity of I. Kargel. The most authoritative authors of that time were C.I. Scofield, E. Sauer, and C.H. MacIntosh (CHM).

[114] E.g. G.V., 'Uverennost' v spasenii' [Assurance of salvation], *BV*, vol. 4 (1972), p. 54.

[115] E.g. M.V. Vanin, 'Osviascheniie' [Sanctification], *BV*, vol. 2 (1964), p. 64.

[116] E.g. A.V. Karev, 'Bozhii plan spaseniia' [God's plan of salvation], *BV*, vol. 1(1970), p.28

biblical text inspires the commentator to shape a certain "spiritual truth" while refining the initial text of the Bible. The conclusion drawn by the author does not follow directly from the text. But Karev had no difficulty in collecting the grains of truth in the case of James. His theses are simple and unambiguous: "Getting rid of rough sins… we still find imperfection in our words and thoughts,"[117] "much disgrace for the church comes through backbiting,"[118] and "a believer should not swear".[119] Then the central statement is illustrated by a number of narrative parts. There are at least three types of narrative inclusions. First, the commentator reconstructs the story of the text's appearance and thus it becomes part of the narrative: for example, the story about James, the author of the letter. In general, the story of the text's origins is an unavoidable part of commentaries on any non-narrative texts by ECB authors. Secondly, the interpreter reminds readers of the narrative that in his/her opinion demonstrates the same idea as that in the text commented upon. Thus the "truth" about backbiting from James 4:11-12 raises associations with the story of Moses who was slandered by Miriam.[120] Finally, interpreters often speak about the Christian life, which was a form of narrative. Preachers talk about possible happenings. For example, commenting on "imperfection" from James 3:2, Karev speaks about "*a* person revived by the Holy Spirit" who "does not swim along the stream of sinful life".[121] This impersonal form of presenting the paradigmatic narrative was typical. At the same time, there are no extra-biblical illustrations. Karev, like other ECB preachers, tries to avoid mentioning his personal experience or stories from daily life. Involving such elements would diminish the sacred status of the proclamation of God's word.

f. Conclusion: holiness and hermeneutics

This chapter and the preceding chapter have dealt with two crucial themes for the topic of the thesis. They are closely linked. The self-understanding of the ECB as a holy community came from the Bible, and it also contributed to the wider understanding of the nature of the biblical narrative. In the way in which I have ordered the chapters and analysed these themes I am suggesting that the concern for holiness by the ECB resulted in their desire for a Sacred Grand Narrative. However, it is also the case that the formation of the Sacred Grand Narrative affected the high value of holiness among ECB. The specifics of ECB hermeneutics

[117] Karev, Mitskevich, Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis], p.164 (comments on James 3:2).

[118] Ibid., p. 174 (comments on James 4:11-12).

[119] Ibid., p. 180 (comments on James 5:12).

[120] Ibid., p. 174.

[121] Ibid., p. 164

were inseparable from their self-positioning as a holy community. The idea of holiness was very important for Soviet evangelicals, not simply because they read about its importance in the Bible but because the tradition of holiness was very deeply ingrained in the ECB, who partly borrowed it from earlier Russian sectarianism, influenced both by Orthodoxy and evangelical holiness movements. In this inner world of holiness the evangelicals in the USSR could feel free from the pressure of their atheistic surroundings.

In *BV* articles and ECB sermons, holiness was the main topic, but as soon as a preacher came out of his pulpit or put aside his pen he dipped into a life that could be very far from the idyllic picture of the written texts. It is in this sense, as well as in connection with the Grand Narrative, that there was a mythological dimension. There was almost no objective, ethical or psychological criteria for what it meant to be holy. "According to the Bible" was the ultimate argument in all discussions. This means that a self-understanding of ECB as a holy congregation was impossible without the mythology that formed them into a community. It seems that mythology was the glue that kept the AUCECB together. Promoting holiness as the most important value was linked to – and indeed entailed - replacing a rational analysis of the Bible with absorption of its narratives and applying them in creating an all embracing Sacred Grand Narrative. This goal overshadowed all other aims in biblical interpretation. In other words, there was a process at work in which the self-understanding of the evangelicals defined their interpretative methods which in turn reinforced that self-understanding. The Bible-based conversionism that allowed a holy opposition of ECB to the rest of the world created their identity.

This situation was unique and it was able to exist for a long time, first of all, due to the isolation of ECB from the wider Christian world and its existence in a society for which living in utopian mythology was a norm. As soon as the forces which supported the isolation disappeared, the mythological paradigm collapsed. Today's offspring of the Soviet ECB have not much in common with the AUCECB, whose inheritance is not now valued highly, though it is still alive. The modern national and denominational unions which replaced the single All-Union Council demonstrated the great diversity that was concealed in the previous structure. Missionary activities of Western and Korean Christian organizations caused post-Soviet evangelicals to be even more diversified.[122] Historical traditions, doctrinal preferences,

[122] See M. Elliott, A. Deyneka, 'Protestant Missionaries in the former Soviet Union', in J. Witte, *Proselytism and orthodoxy in Russia: the new war for souls*, ed. M.Bourdeaux (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1999), pp. 197-220. A more detail account of the post-Soviet history of religion can be found in P.Froese, *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (California: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 142-164.

social ideals play no lesser roles in building their identities than their fidelity to the Bible. Accordingly, their hermeneutical methods became manifold and many-sided. But the previous paradigm is still worthy of study. Not only because it still exerts certain influences in Eastern European churches but because it presents a special socio-religious experiment. The new challenge is to map and analyze the hermeneutical legacy of the Soviet ECB in detail, to find historical sources and to explore influences on particular interpretations. Such analysis promises many fascinating discoveries and new perspectives.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, which was formed in 1944, through analyzing aspects of their biblical interpretation as these appear in the AUCECB's official publications, particularly the official journal, *Bratsky Vestnik* (*BV*), which is the major primary source for historical information about the AUCECB in the post-WWII years of the Soviet Union. The goal of the thesis has been to explore the identity of the AUCECB as a hermeneutical or interpretative community. The investigation which has been undertaken in this thesis of the methods of Bible reading by the ECB community reveals a great deal about its theological preferences, insights and worldview. A certain amount has been written about the AUCECB, but there has been no detailed examination of the way the denomination presented itself in its publications. This consideration of the Bible-orientated articles written by Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the post-war period of the Soviet Union helps in understanding their inner world and opening new horizons in explaining their spiritual texture.

The new contribution offered in this study is the attempt that has been made to look at the world through ECB eyes using primarily the sources of their self-expression. I have sought to understand these sources in terms of their actual context, rather than imposing on them any pre-formed expectations. During the Soviet era, work published within Russia on the Baptists was clearly ideological, for example, G.S. Lyalina, in her "Baptists: illusions and reality".[1] Even work by evangelicals, notably the "History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists", was selective.[2] The historical background that forms the framework of the analysis attempted in this thesis is important. However, the main purpose of the thesis is not to re-tell

[1] G.S. Lialina, *Baptizm: illiuzii i real'nost'* [Baptists: illusions and reality] (Moscow: IPL, 1977).

[2] *Istoriia Evangeliskikh Khristian-Baptistov v SSSR* [History of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR] (Moscow: Izdaniie Vsesoiuznogo Soveta Evangel'skikh Khristian Baptistov, 1989).

the external history of the AUCECB, but rather to seek to probe the world-perception of those who led the Union of ECB from 1944.[3] The core of the thesis is the argument that there were certain distinctive traits in the discourse of AUCECB interpreters and that they wrote their material with the specific aim of trying to build and strengthen the ECB community through engaging with the Bible. Having in mind this methodology, it has been necessary to move from topic to topic in the chapters of the thesis, in order to find out what was primary and what was secondary in constructing ECB mentality.

In this three-part study, each part containing three chapters, the first part analysed the historical background of the ECB's biblical interpretative activities. The significance of this part consists in providing information that is crucial for a proper understanding of such activities, within the broader context of Evangelical Christian and Baptist publications. In this part I considered the prehistory and origins of the AUCECB, demonstrating that the history of Russian evangelicalism as it is presented in most sources is the history of the predecessors of the AUCECB. The main sources of Evangelical Christian and Baptist life were the southern Union of Baptists which developed from the Tbilisi Baptist congregation, the emergence of many Ukrainian Baptist churches, and the northern evangelical community of the Pashkovites, with their centre in St. Petersburg. These centres attracted other smaller communities and formed the core of the Russian evangelical movement.[4] At the same time, they preserved and passed on to future generations features of Russian sectarianism expressed, for example, in the Molokans.

Among the most important factors influencing the history of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the Russian Empire were persecutions at the end of the nineteenth century and the period of World War I. These persecutions shaped the sectarian organization and mentality of Russian Baptists. A rather different outlook characterized the Union of Evangelical Christians, formed in the early twentieth century under the leadership of Ivan Prokhanov. The more conservative Baptists tended to close up against mainstream society, while, on the other hand, Prokhanov's wing proposed a mission-oriented Christianity with the

[3] Thus this thesis goes beyond the standard works of analysis in English, principally W. Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1981).

[4] The most recent study of the longer history is A. Puzynin, 'The Tradition of the Gospel Christians: A Study of their Identity and Theology during the Russian, Soviet, and Post-Soviet Periods' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, 2008).

agenda of propagating evangelical values to all.[5] Publishing was crucial to this enterprise. These two wings, Baptists and Evangelical Christians, were unable to overcome their disagreements until the complete destruction of both unions by Stalin's anti-religious campaign. The state-imposed merger of the Evangelical Christians and Baptists to form the AUCECB at the end of World War II meant that the AUCECB inherited the tendencies and traditions of both Unions. These traditions continued to be observed in *Bratsky Vestnik* which picked up and carried forward the history of evangelical publishing in Russia. I argued for the highly significant role of publications for the expression of Russian evangelical identity. At the same time, *BV* had to operate against the background of unprecedented state censorship, which significantly restricted the possibility of expressing evangelical convictions.

With the place of publications for Soviet evangelicals examined, a chapter in part 1 of the thesis was devoted to an historical sketch of the publications of the AUCECB. Whilst there have been important studies of specific developments, in different periods, of religion in Russia in this era,[6] I offer a new perspective: a history related to publishing activities, arguing that writings that were published in *BV* and other sources reflected the development of the organization of ECB. The history of *BV* from its start to its decline after the fall of the Soviet Union followed the same stages as the Union itself. The two major leaders of the Union, A. Karev and A. Bichkov - who delegated his editing role to V. Kulikov - defined the two distinct periods in the history of AUCECB publications. The main periodical of the ECB was attempting to outline AUCECB identity from the initial years of the Union. The AUCECB passed through two periods of instability at the end of the 1940s and around the 1960s, caused by a boost of atheist hostility toward sectarianism. But eventually it arrived at a stable form in the 1970s and 1980s and demonstrated the true values and aspirations of ECB leaders when they achieved a measure of freedom in the expression of their thought. Thus the later publications in *BV* represent the true character of the ECB as a biblically-orientated movement. The general tendency in publications in the later period was to increase the number of devotional sermon-like articles.

In the light of this, I went on to consider specific issues in the use of the Bible by the ECB. There was a strong belief that all Christians should read and interpret the Bible. Indeed

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[5] A period very well covered by Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution, 1905-1929*, Indiana-Michigan series in Russian and East European Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

[6] See T.A. Chumachenko, *Church and state in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev years* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2002).

this was seen as commanded by the Bible itself.[7] I argued that the process of biblical interpretation was understood not as an act of reasoning but as a daily spiritual practice, and that the reliability of interpretation was closely connected to the personal qualities of the interpreters, exploring the particular focus on preaching in relation to the reading and interpretation of the Bible among Soviet evangelicals. I showed that the coherence of sermons was not an aspect which was highly prized, for many sermons lacked that element.[8] A more important facet was spiritual power. Here I applied principles of charismatic preaching present in Russian traditional Christianity to illuminate the attitudes demonstrated by ECB in regard to biblical interpretation. Russian Orthodox teachers stressed that a true sermon must be "not with wise and persuasive words, but with demonstration of the Spirit's power" (1 Cor.2:4).[9] The argument presented was that the reading of the Bible was considered by AUCECB members as a sacred act which demanded certain personal qualities of interpreters and was inseparable from the idea of divine revelation to the community of believers. Here is the idea of the hermeneutical community. The results of the first part of the thesis lead on to the search for a deeper understanding of biblical interpretation within the AUCECB.

The second part of the thesis was devoted to an analysis of three major aims of AUCECB hermeneutics as observed in the publications of the AUCECB, and especially in *BV*: the doctrinal, educational, and ideological. In looking at the doctrinal purposes in AUCECB publications, the doctrinal traditions of ECB predecessors were investigated. Two major lines in the tradition of doctrinal confessions were discovered: 1) the influence of the Hamburg Confession by Johann Oncken, built in catechism format; and 2) narrative-orientated confessions, climaxing in Ivan Prokhanov's version. This led to a consideration of the doctrinal articles in *BV*. A significant element was polemical, especially in relation to Pentecostal teaching, although BV reproduced work by Kargel which sought to establish evangelical common ground in the area of pneumatology.[10] On the whole, *BV* authors were rather eclectic when articulating their views. They tried different options in constructing a single confession for the AUCECB, starting from a promotion of Prokhanov's and Kargel's creeds to finishing, quite unexpectedly, with choosing Oncken's model for their final Confession of 1985. The lack of consistency in the regard to doctrinal issues led to the

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[7] A. Karev, A. Mitskevich, V. Popov, *Ekzegetika* [Exegesis] (Moscow: VSEKhB), p.4.

[8] K. Somov, *O propovedi i propovednikakh* [On preaching and preachers], *BV*, vol. 2 (1964), p. 33.

[9] *Nastolnaya Kniga Svyashennika* [Priest's Handbook] (Moscow: *Izdatelstvo Moskovskoy Patriarkhii*, vol. 5, 1986, p.12.

[10] I.V. Kargel, *Besedy o Sv'atom Dukhe* [Talks about the Holy Spirit], *BV*, vol. 2 (1945), pp. 15-22.

conclusion that the doctrinal aim was of limited importance for ECB leaders and their hermeneutics.

Having devoted a chapter to theological issues, in the following chapter I explored the educational aim in the way the Bible was used in AUCECB publications. Russian evangelicals did not have a long tradition of Christian education. Various Bible schools which operated after 1905 did not last very long and often were not able to have even a single graduation. So periodicals partly fulfilled the role of educators. Bible studies in *BV* were important for preachers.[11] The educational aim can be observed particularly in some articles from the Karev period. But materials of that sort were significantly reduced in *BV* after the AUCECB Bible Correspondence Courses (BCC) were begun in 1968. An evaluation of BCC textbooks demonstrates that they were mostly randomly compiled from different sources. This is evidence of the lack of any clearly defined vision by ECB leaders in building the educational system. The conclusion of this part of the thesis is that education, although seen as necessary, was not the most important priority for the AUCECB, nor was this the aim that was at the top of the agenda for the authors who wrote for *BV*.

The next chapter was devoted to the ideological aim in AUCECB publications. Due to pressure from the Soviet authorities, ideological articles occupied a larger number of *BV* pages than educational or doctrinal ones. At the same time, it is easy to see that ideological articles were not the core of ECB publications. Only during the early years were there attempts to conflate Communist ideology and the Bible. But later ideological articles were strictly segregated from devotional materials. The Bible was used only in those areas where ideology was seen as compatible with genuine spirituality, such as peace-making, Christian unity, social relationships or work. An example is the 1956 *BV* article, "Work and prayer".[12] Peace-making was a particularly prominent theme, as in the 1958 article, "The Church should be a herald of peace."[13] In the later years of *BV* the ideological aim lost its initial propagandistic character. Articles on topics that belonged strictly to the ideological sphere gradually disappeared, although themes such as unity remained important.

The consecutive consideration of the theological, educational and ideological aims showed that they were important in different ways, each offering insights into the formation of the AUCECB as an interpretative community. However, despite their significance in

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[11] A typical example is V.S. Shchavelin, *Chto dolzhen znat' propovednik* [What a preacher must know], *BV*, vols. 3-4(1955), p. 69

[12] N.K., *Trud i molitva* [Work and prayer], *BV*, vol. 3-4 (1956), p. 71.

[13] *Tserkov' Khrista dolzhna byt' glashataiem mira* [The Church should be a herald of peace], *BV*, vol. 3 (1958), p. 3.

understanding the life of the AUCECB, I have argued that none of these aspects was central to AUCECB objectives. Such a conclusion meant that there had to be a search for the true focus of ECB hermeneutics.

This led us to an exploration of the idea that spirituality was the area that was central where the reading of the Bible was concerned. Thus the third part of the thesis was devoted to an analysis of ECB spirituality and the hermeneutical methods related to it. The first chapter in this part argued that the concept of spiritual conversion through personal acceptance of Christ was the initial aspect of the core that tied together ECB spirituality. I examined Luke's parable of the prodigal son as the archetype of a spiritual journey for AUCECB members. A. Karev's 1972 article in *BV* under the title "Prodigal son" was paradigmatic.[14] The concept of conversion implies three stages: life in sin, conversion, and sanctification. In this chapter I probed those stages, finding evidence that they were not of equal value in publications of the ECB. It appears that the first two stages (sin and conversion), while important, were given very specific treatment by authors of AUCECB publications. The initial stages of the conversionist process – life in sin - implied dealing with the situation of unbelievers, which was outlawed. Even reflections on the moment of conversion were not of primary significance within the main spiritual vision of ECB leaders, which was to nurture those people who already belonged to their churches. Thus sanctification or holiness appears to be the centre of gravity of ECB spirituality. This conclusion led to the next part of the thesis.

Here I discussed the concept of holiness in the mentality of Soviet evangelicals. The idiom "holiness" in the Russian context has specific features. This has been explored, for example, by V. Toporov, in his work, "Holiness and saints in the Russian spiritual culture".[15] It is associated with extraordinary manifestations and emotional experiences. The view of holiness adhered to within the ECB was shaped by I. Kargel who drew from ideas of sanctification drawn from the Keswick holiness tradition.[16] I have also argued here for the influence of Slavic traditions of holiness. The weaving together of these strands produced the image of holiness that was adopted by virtually all evangelical believers in the USSR. Holiness was understood by the ECB leaders, first of all, as personal fellowship with Christ showing itself by adherence to behavioural norms as these was formulated from "biblical teaching" within ECB communities. The demand for holiness was based upon a personal self-

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[14] A.V. Karev, 'Bludnyi syn' [The prodigal son], *BV*, vol. 5 (1972), p. 15.

[15] V.N. Toporov, *Sviatost' i sviatye v russkoi dukhovnoi kul'ture* [Holiness and saints in Russian spiritual culture] (Moscow: Shk. «Iazyki rus. kul'tury», 1995-1998).

[16] See G. L. Nichols, 'Ivan V. Kargel (1849-1937) and the Development of Russian Evangelical Spirituality' (Ph.D., International Baptists Theological Seminary, University of Wales, 2010).

understanding seen in connection with Bible-based narratives. There was also, in keeping with the holiness tradition of Russian people, a belief that holiness entailed suffering.

The final chapter of the thesis, drawing all the strands together, demonstrated the crucial significance of the Bible in constructing ECB spirituality. Here I offered an analysis of the hermeneutical method associated with the specific role that the Scriptures played in ECB communities. I argued that the essence of this method consisted in building and adopting a Sacred Grand Narrative or mythology, that is a narrative set which was accepted by ECB uncritically as *the* ultimate truth. Here I drew from the "Grand Narrative" as proposed by Jean-François Lyotard, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*[17] The retelling of scriptural stories had a great value *per se*; it opened doors to the divine presence without any concern as to how these stories could be applied in practice. All other aims examined earlier were secondary to this ultimate hermeneutical concern. The stories told by biblical interpreters were stories about holy individuals. They modelled the holy life so prized by the ECB and reflected the character of the spirituality of exemplary believers. The two basic forms in which these interpretational materials were presented were the expositional and topical approaches, though the underlying interpretative method remained the same.

This thesis argued, therefore, that an analysis of the use of the Bible in AUCECB publications makes it possible to describe the character of the ECB. There is diversity and even inconsistency in many aspects of the ECB publications. This is not surprising, considering the various streams which flowed into the AUCECB. Also, the Union had to wrestle with various theological educational and ideological issues. On the other hand, the publications reveal the common values shared by all ECB leaders: the supreme authority of the Bible and the highest appreciation for the sanctified life according to the Scriptures. For many ECB authors, such as *BV*'s last chief editor, V. Kulikov, being biblical meant being set apart from the reality of the world around: biblical interpretation created a world view that was in some sense an escape from the great difficulties of existence in the hostile atmosphere of a totalitarian regime. Just here lay the importance of the alternative Sacred Grand Narrative.

There is more work that can be done in this area. First, in the present thesis I did not explore in detail the question of the origins of the spirituality and hermeneutics of the ECB. Tracing different influences could yield important discoveries. Second, a promising direction

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[17] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

in the development of the studies of ECB spirituality could consist in a complete mapping of the Grand Narrative of this religious group. This would be a significant contribution to an understanding of the mentality and spirituality of Soviet evangelicals. Third, it is important to investigate the further development of the ECB world-view during the post-Soviet period when traditional spirituality met new challenges, such as national and denominational separations, foreign influences and new political circumstances. Such an investigation would produce many practical uses, since it would help to explain the identity of the evangelical groups that originated from the Soviet ECB. Finally there could be further work done to place the AUCECB experience in a wider context. Bernard Green has looked at the way in which Baptists in Germany responded to the Nazi power during the Third Reich.[18] A comparison between Baptist attitudes to different hostile regimes – Nazi and Communist – could be fruitful.

Although I have argued for the crucial importance of spirituality in the identity of the AUCECB, as seen in its publications, the full picture of the history of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union is much more varied than the images that are received from releases of their official periodical. It is not possible to seek to press all AUCECB congregations into the Procrustean bed of a conversionist-holiness ideology. However, this thesis has used the official publications to argue that striving for holiness and the construction of a Sacred Grand Narrative were at the heart of the ECB's self-understanding as a biblical community. In presenting this argument, I have attempted to advance our understanding of this important group within Russian Christianity by scholarly investigation. I consider that the thesis contains new perspectives in the study of the AUCECB. Evaluating the formative role of the Bible in the development of ECB identity has enabled the discovery of the overwhelming, previously unnoticed, importance of spirituality in building this community.

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